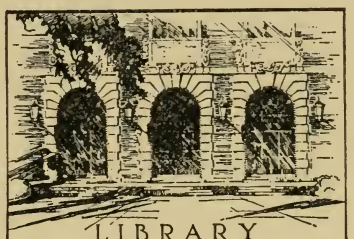
823
B73w
v.3

Mrs. Wm. Lock



LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

823
B73 W
v.3

974

THE WHITE HOODS.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

THE

WHITE HOODS;

An Historical Romance.

BY

ANNA ELIZA BRAY,

LATE

MRS. CHARLES STOTHARD,

AUTHOR OF "DE FOIX;" "LETTERS WRITTEN DURING A TOUR THROUGH NORMANDY AND BRITANNY;" "MEMOIRS OF THE LATE CHARLES A. STOTHARD, F.S.A." &c. &c.

"Be brave then: for your captain is brave,
And vows reformation.
There shall be no money: all shall eat
And drink on my score; and I will apparel them
All in one livery, that they may agree like brothers,
And worship me their lord." SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, AND GREEN,

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1828.

823
B73w
v.3

THE WHITE HOODS.

CHAPTER I.

The greater part of that night, in which the Earl of Flanders so miraculously escaped the imminent dangers by which he was surrounded, was spent by him, Anna, and the poor widow, in devising means for his escape, since his continuance in Bruges appeared so fraught with peril, that it was deemed better, at all events, to quit the town as soon as possible, and rather to trust to such a chance of escape as the open fields and plains might offer, than to remain where he was.

Female acuteness is generally most conspicuous in moments of difficulty that require promptitude and alacrity; so was it now. For whilst Lewis

vainly considered and reconsidered what was best to be done for his safety, his companions devised the mode. The widow provided him with some mean apparel for his disguise, that had belonged to her deceased husband, and Anna pointed out the necessity of his endeavouring to pass the city walls before the full light of day. Fortunately for Lewis, more than one of the city gates had, on the previous night, been torn off their hinges by the White Hoods, when they followed up their victory, so that the difficulty of giving the pass-word, ere they could be opened, was spared him.

The widow now busied herself as well as she was able in assisting to disguise his person. His long hair, which, according to the custom of the nobles of the time, he usually wore bound round by a chaplet of pearls, or a fillet, so as to confine it to the back part of the head, was now purposely dishevelled, and suffered to fall close about his face and brows. A common jerkin, such as was worn by artificers, with a brown leather belt, and a cloak and hood of blue stuff, were put on as carelessly as possible — the latter

drawn close over a little skull-cap placed on the crown of the head.

Thus equipped, Lewis prepared once more to sally forth with Anna. He thanked the widow sincerely for the generous manner in which she had become, under Providence, the means of preserving his life; promised her a large reward, should he ever again have the power to bestow it, and offered her several pieces of gold from the purse he had about him. These the honest creature at first refused accepting, saying, that in the Earl's present condition, gold might be found necessary to procure not only sustenance, but horses to facilitate his escape, when he should be beyond the walls of Bruges. The Earl, however, assured her, that accepting what he offered for herself and children, would do him no injury, since he had still sufficient to bear him to Lille, a place he hoped to reach, by some means or other, before the following night.

With many a caution, and with many a prayer for their safety, did the poor widow bid adieu to her lord and his amiable companion, the orphan

of John Lyon, who, though the child of the original instigator of the rebellion against Lewis, was now acting as the instrument of his preservation from its effects. And the damsel, who, but a brief space before, had feared the Earl as her most cruel oppressor, now feared lest he should fall by the oppression of others. Thus singular and unforeseen are the chances and circumstances of this world; and thus, under the mysterious, but merciful, guidance of Providence, events, in his hand, are made as salutary lessons to teach the proud, that even to those they deem the most humble, the most dependent on their will, they may one day owe an obligation for service, from which no state of life, however exalted, can be entirely exempt; for all are human, and mutual service is the bond as well as the duty of humanity.

The widow blessed Anna with tears in her eyes; and whilst her good wishes were fervently uttered for the welfare of the Earl, though perfectly respectful, there was a greater ease, a less degree of being awed, in her manner towards him, than could be expected from one born in

low life, who stood in the presence of a prince. But calamity, like death, is a great leveller of distinctions; and it might be, that when the poor widow of Bruges spoke her farewell to the noble Earl, whom she had preserved by hiding him under the bed of her own children, she thought, perhaps, less of him as a lord, and more of him as a fellow-creature to whom she had done a kindness.

It was scarcely day-break when Lewis and Anna quitted the house. The passage in which it stood was empty, and as they passed down several streets, (towards the gates which opened upon the fields without the town,) they met but few persons at that early hour. The White Hoods, after having burnt the habitations of some of their foes, had been prevented from committing further violence of the like nature, on pain of death, by the express command of Von Artaveld. The victors, considerably fatigued, not only by their previous exertions, but also by the energy and enthusiasm with which they had attacked the citizens of Bruges, found so much comfort and refreshment in the various

quarters assigned to them, that they at length gave over the work of destruction ; and though nothing could withhold them from pillage, yet they contented themselves for the present with such portions of gold as they could readily obtain from the well-stored coffers of the wealthy burghers ; and having regaled upon their good cheer the greater part of the night, the rebels had at last sought repose.

As Anna and Lewis passed through the streets, silence and desolation seemed to reign around them ; the houses that had been fired by the White Hoods lay in heaps levelled with the ground, and sent forth volumes of smoke from their smouldering embers. Several habitations were entirely deserted, their inmates having fallen or fled on the previous evening ; and frequently was Anna chilled with horror, when, stumbling against something which obstructed her passage, and was scarcely visible through the dim twilight of early dawn, she perceived heaps of the dead lying before her path, which the victors had not yet found leisure to remove. As the day approached, she looked more cautiously

around, and often turned aside to avoid such spectacles of death.

At length she passed, with her companion, beyond the gates in safety; and, as they advanced into the plains, the day, with its purple and subdued light, softly illumined the sky. The birds chirped gaily; and the lark, springing lightly from its bed, like the spirit of youth, to hail its early hopes, arose to meet the dawn. Thousands of diamond drops of dew glittered upon the green sward, or trembled on the delicate wild flowers with which the plains were sprinkled; and all the beauty, the purity, and the melody of nature, rejoiced, as it were, to pay their united homage to their beneficent Creator. How great was the contrast between this scene of natural beauty made for man, and that of wild outrage, the work of man's hands, that had so recently been committed within the walls of Bruges! Anna was struck with this reflection, as she mentally supplicated the Father of Mercy for safety and support; and she added to her secret prayer for her own preservation, a fervent orison for that of her beloved Sir Walter.

Whilst Anna and the Earl were passing through the streets of Bruges, from prudent motives they had observed the profoundest silence. But though now they were alone in the open plains, and no danger could ensue from conversation, neither of them seemed much disposed to be the first to enter upon it. Both were silent, and both from opposite feelings.

Anna, whose conduct was constantly regulated by fixed principles and generous feelings, had undertaken to assist the Earl in his escape from the most liberal motives. Governed by the same, she resolved not to desert him whilst she could be instrumental to his preservation; for should he fall into the hands of the White Hoods, as the daughter of John Lyon, she hoped that she might, perhaps, have some influence with them, or, at least, induce them to take the Earl before Von Artaveld, on whose honour and humanity she placed a great reliance. Lewis had once pursued her with lawless love. He had denounced her ruin, when he discovered the attachment that subsisted between her and Sir Walter d'Anghien, should she encourage

his hopes. To save Sir Walter she had voluntarily resigned him, unless the Earl gave his sanction to their mutual affection. These were bitter remembrances, but still Lewis had kept his faith towards her. He had sheltered her in honour and safety within his own palace, at a time when, but for such shelter, the worst evils might have fallen upon her; and Anna, whose nature was ever prone to forgive injuries, especially when their remembrance could be blotted out by the slightest benefit, now thought she was bound by gratitude to assist him. But still was she doubtful how far Lewis would acknowledge her service to him, or how far it might work upon his mind, to induce him to give up any remaining feelings of lawless passion in favour of his nephew's honourable affection.

These thoughts made her timid and anxious, and though she felt the most painful suspense respecting what, even now, might be the fate of Sir Walter d'Anghien, and longed to communicate her fears, yet she was too apprehensive of offending, to name him to his uncle; and, unwilling to speak upon any indifferent subject,

when this pressed so near her heart, she remained pensive and silent, as she walked by the side of Lewis from the walls of Bruges.

The Earl, whose mind was absorbed and distracted by a thousand contending feelings and apprehensions, was not, however, insensible to the idea, that, perhaps, at this moment, he owed, in all probability, the preservation of his life to the youthful creature who was beside him. The sudden and terrible change in his fortunes, the distraction of his country, the uncertainty of his future prospects, all pressed upon him. That he might again become a prince of power and honour, or that in a few hours, if taken by his enemies, he might, perhaps, be consigned to a dungeon or to death, were anxieties that successively rose in his mind to torment him; and he thought, with intense feeling, upon his nephew, whom he knew to be his most faithful, zealous, and assured friend. Conscience whispered a reproach for his late conduct towards him respecting Anna. But her beauty, her charms, were too powerful to be remembered by Lewis, even in the hour of peril, with indifference; and

he could not think upon their mutual affection without a feeling of envy and regret. Yet his own escape, the services they had both rendered him, aroused in his breast feelings of a better kind. He resolved to respect his vow; and though he should wander with Anna through the loneliest desert, that not a word of lawless passion should escape his lips.

Lewis had been bred in a court; he had been an indulged son, and was accustomed to the uncontrolled power of a prince, but he was rather of a weak, than of a depraved heart. The springs of action that flowed thence had been polluted, but their source was not wholly contaminated; and though he had been hurried into bad actions when under the influence of passion, he had neither that callous feeling, nor that cold-heartedness, which renders a man incapable of listening to the dictates of reason, when she speaks during the stillness of the soul.

Such characters as Lewis de Male are capable of remorse. A great occasion will sometimes powerfully arouse it, and repentance will often follow, though the inclination reluctantly gives

place to admit it. In such a temper of mind was Lewis at this moment. Desirous to conquer, as much as possible, his passion for Anna, he feared the power of her fascinations, he wished to avoid their influence. Wandering and distracted in his thoughts, he walked silently forward, with his eyes averted from his fair companion.

At length, they came to the extremity of the plain, where two roads presented themselves. One of these led towards Lille, and the other to a wood of some extent, in which the Earl, during the days of his prosperity, had often followed the chase. They paused here for a moment, when Anna ventured to address her companion, but in a low and timid voice. "My lord," said she, "this, if I mistake not, is the road to Lille; but might I presume to counsel you, I would not venture upon it here. Yonder I perceive a troop of persons advancing. They are well mounted, and seem partially armed. I should fear they are enemies, for your friends, I think, would hardly venture so near to Bruges, and so openly, unless they came supported by a

more numerous body of men at arms than advance yonder. It will be prudent to avoid them."

The Earl looked in the direction to which Anna pointed. "No," replied Lewis, "those are no friends of mine; for surely the banner of Ghent floats above their heads. We will leave the direct road, and turn into the wood. I know a path which opens thence, at about a league's distance on the road to Lille. We can seek this, and either immediately proceed, or remain till the shadows of evening shall assist us by concealing our flight. But how, maiden, will you, who during the night have found neither rest nor sleep, support the toil of journeying thus on foot."

"My lord," said Anna, "the distracted events of these sad times have too often broken my rest, to render the trial new to me. I have health and strength; and, in a good cause, God, I trust, will give me spirit to bear all hardships. Besides, we may rest ourselves in the wood, before we continue our journey."

Whilst Anna spoke, they turned into a path

which led directly into the wood. Lewis now offered her his arm for support, with an air of gentle kindness that spoke more assurance to Anna than the words by which he accompanied the action. Still she felt timid and reluctant. "Nay, lean on my arm, maiden," said Lewis; "can you fear to accept that support, which, but for your own generous conduct, I could not now offer you."

Anna no longer hesitated. Though young and inexperienced, she possessed that intuitive delicacy of feeling, which in an instant detects the difference of expression subsisting between an act that proceeds from kindness, and one that is the consequence of passion.

Lewis and Anna soon gained the interior of the wood, where they proposed to rest, ere they proceeded on their way. The widow had bestowed upon them all the means of refreshment her house could afford. These consisted of a small loaf of bread, and a few dried fish. The fugitives now sought some place where they might partake of their frugal meal, with the hope of present security; and diverging some-

what apart from the direct path, they passed under the pendant boughs, and, following the course of a small stream, came to a natural recess, where it welled out from a rock, and playing over several portions of its polished surface, spread into two separate channels, that watered the forest in opposite directions. Here the wanderers paused, and Lewis sunk down upon a fragment of the rock. Anna looked upon the Earl, and observed in his countenance an expression of intense anxiety and grief, whilst the deadly whiteness of his cheeks indicated a considerable share of bodily indisposition.

"My lord," said she, "I fear you are little able to bear the toils to which you are exposed. The events of last night have overpowered you. You are ill; what can I do to help you?"

The Earl fixed his eyes upon Anna's features, whilst a grave and solemn expression overspread his own, and taking her hand within his, as she stood before him, he said, "Maiden, I am sick in soul; these events, I fear, are but the beginning of sorrows; they are but the scourges of Heaven in requital of past deeds. And is it

from you that I must receive help? from you, whom I have injured, that I must now receive succour?"

"My lord," answered Anna, "God is my witness that I think not of the past, unless it be to remember that you kept faith with me, and sheltered me. I would now serve you, as I am in duty bound to serve you, whilst I have strength to do it, for you are my natural lord and prince."

"Alas! Anna," said the Earl, "you know not half the danger you incur by serving me. Should I fall into the power of Du Bois, you have no hope for liberty or honour. And should you return with me to Lille in safety, where I could alone protect you, I fear I could not there conceal you from the vigilance of the Countess of Artois, or from the malice of her dependent, Gilbert Matthew. It seems to me, therefore, that the best course you could adopt for your own preservation would be to return to Bruges, and at once to place yourself under the care of Von Artaveld; he is honourable, though my enemy. Leave me, then, maiden, leave me

to my own fortunes. I have no right to look for aid from you."

"My lord," replied Anna, "every creature, be he prince or peasant, has a right to look for aid at the hand of his fellow-being, and I will not desert you in your extremity of sorrow. I have also another motive, my lord, that prompts me to serve you with more than ordinary zeal."

Anna spoke these last words in a tremulous yet solemn tone, whilst a tear, at the moment, glistened in her eye. "What motive," said the Earl, eagerly; "speak, I conjure you?"

"We are taught," replied the damsel, as she devoutly crossed herself, "by the holy mysteries of our church, that the souls of the departed suffer in the flames of an expiatory punishment, till such time as the sins committed in the body are atoned for by torments long and grievous. We are also taught, that this miserable time of suffering may be shortened, and the souls of the departed freed, by the prayers and deeds of such friends as remain to them on earth, and piously endeavour to work out their enlargement. I

would do much to free my poor father's spirit from the fires of purgatory. He was the first man to rebel against you. It was a grievous sin; I would now endeavour to cancel it, by the most devoted service to your cause."

"Dearest maiden," said the Earl, "such filial piety, such virtue as thine, must surely cancel all thy father's sins; and the Saints of Heaven, whom thou resemblest on earth, will plead to our Blessed Lady and the holy St. Peter, to open to him the golden gates of paradise. Think not, then, of the dead, but of the living. Once more, wilt thou leave me?"

"No, my lord," replied Anna, "I will not desert you, to join your rebellious people."

A ray of joy lightened the pale countenance of Lewis, and, emphatically pressing the hand of Anna between both his own, he said, in an earnest manner, "Canst thou, canst thou, forgive."

"So help me Heaven," answered Anna, and she looked up as she made the solemn appeal, "I do forgive thee, even as I would be forgiven. Continue thus to me — be to me as a father and

a prince, and I will serve you as your true vassal, even to the death."

Scarcely had Anna pronounced these last words, when a rustling of the leaves, near the spot where the Earl and herself were conversing, struck upon her ear. Lewis started up, and drew from beneath the mean cloak in which he was disguised his dagger, the only instrument of defence he had retained about his person. Anna turned pale, but, summoning her resolution to her aid, she looked at Lewis, and placed her forefinger upon her lip in token of silence. She then bent her head, and softly whispered in his ear, " Retire within the recess of the rocks; you may not yet be seen. I am in no danger. I will issue forth, and see what you have to fear. If you are observed, all may be lost. I beseech you, my lord, to withdraw among the rocks, and leave the rest to me."

Lewis obeyed her directions. Anna drew her mantle close about her face, took up the little basket that contained their repast, in order that she might the better appear like a peasant girl, and stept boldly forward. Again she heard

a rustling amongst the leaves and boughs of the trees, near the pathway where she stood. Anna paused for a moment, the steps instantly ceased. This circumstance convinced her, that whoever the concealed person might be, he was watching her motions.

"It may be some person who lurks near to seize upon the Earl," thought Anna. "Perhaps he may not yet have seen Lewis. If so, I will endeavour to mislead the search, and walk in an opposite direction, towards the outskirts of the wood. I will pluck wild flowers by the way, that I may seem to be employed like other country damsels, as they loiter on their path." As these thoughts passed through the mind of Anna, she paced leisurely forward, filling her basket from the bushes and plants that grew thick around. Still the footsteps of the cautious lurker seemed to follow her, and she no longer doubted they were the steps of some one who suspected her to be in company with Lewis in his flight. Exceedingly alarmed by this apprehension, she resolved to appear as careless and as light-hearted as possible, the better to deceive

the observer. She, therefore, whilst she strolled on, sang a little air, common with the damsels of her country.

Scarcely had Anna warbled a few notes, when the concealed person suddenly rushed forth, and ere she could recover from the alarm this action had occasioned her, he crossed her path, threw his arms about her, and, clasping her with fervour to his bosom, exclaimed, "Thank God, you are safe then!" Anna looked up, and beheld Sir Walter d'Anghien; his dress in great disorder, his countenance pallid, but expressive of the liveliest joy and affection.

For some moments she remained dumb, from pleasure and surprise; when the words "Oh, Walter! thank God that you too are safe; how came you here?" escaped her lips in such agitation, that they were scarcely articulately pronounced. "I will tell you all anon," replied Sir Walter. "I am safe for the present; but where is the Earl? Surely some one was with you when I first observed a female, who I then little thought to be Anna, standing under the shelter of the trees?"

"The Earl is in this wood," said Anna. "Why did you lurk near us without speaking?"

"I was doubtful who you were," replied Sir Walter; "and you will soon find that I have sufficient cause to observe some degree of caution. How did you escape from Bruges?"

"I will tell you all as we pass on to join the Earl," said Anna; "let us instantly seek him."

Whilst they did so, Anna related briefly the events of the preceding evening, and the manner of their escape from Bruges. She spoke quick, and her whole frame appeared agitated with the delight and surprise she experienced at again meeting Sir Walter in safety.

Joy, like sorrow, is the parent of violent emotions. Anna could not conceal her feelings, and yet, steady in the observance of her principles, she would not allow herself to mention a subject so intimately connected with their mutual affection; for although Lewis had changed his manner towards her, he had yet given no sanction to the pretensions of his nephew. "Do I once more behold you, my beloved Anna?" said Sir Walter. "Are you once more mine? So

great is the joy that I feel at being near you, that I could at this moment forget the dangers by which I am surrounded; and yet, I fear I must too soon leave you to meet them. Tell me, I beseech you, ere we return to the prince, are you still mine — still my own affectionate Anna? Bid me hope that hereafter I may claim you as mine, and I shall be lighter in heart and firmer in spirit to meet the perils of these sad times."

"Sir Walter," replied Anna, with a gravity of aspect she had not yet assumed during the interview, "forbear, I conjure you, to speak upon this subject. I am bound by a vow the most solemn never to encourage your hopes but by the sanction of your prince."

"And has he," eagerly enquired Sir Walter, "has he dared still to forbid them? Has he dared to plead his own dishonourable passion, and after all you have done to save him?"

"Be not thus hasty," said Anna; "the Earl has uttered not a word to me but such as may meet a damsel's ear without prejudice to her honour. You have not been named in our con-

ference. But these are not times for the indulgence of private feeling. I am still bound by my vow. The Earl is in imminent danger; let us think of the means to save him, and leave the rest to that unknown futurity which, under Providence, may be of a colour contrary to our expectations. Sorrow is sometimes the end of our fairest hopes; whilst our tears not unfrequently, like those of the morning, are dissipated as the day appears."

"And can you thus evade my hopes?" said Sir Walter. "Can you thus deny me the only support to which I cling, to bear me through the perils and anxieties of these events; through all the sorrows that await me? Do not deny me one poor hope — one assurance of faithful affection — one remembrance dear to my soul. You are still silent, and I fear that indifference assumes the character of resolution. This silence is not the consequence of your vow, but of coldness."

Anna looked pained by these reproaches, but she feared to enter upon a subject that might betray her into some expression of her feelings.

She deemed it right to suppress them; and looking gently up in Sir Walter's face, as she led him on to the spot where Lewis was concealed, she only said, "Come, come, let us banish these sad thoughts. Let us trust in Heaven for our future happiness."

The feelings, like the hopes, of a lover, turn upon the slightest point. These few words acted powerfully upon the mind of Sir Walter, and restored a degree of tranquillity to his agitated feelings; for Anna, by the application of the word *us*, had placed her own happiness in the same scale with *his*. She thus had combined their hopes, and Sir Walter was satisfied. There was a tenderness, too, in her manner, that dwelt upon his recollection when her words had ceased. To speak of any two persons *collectively*, generally implies that they are on the same level; but *us* from the lips of a beloved object (uniting, by the application of the word, the object itself with the lover,) is music as sweet to the ear as the corresponding harmonies formed by separate instruments.

Lewis had retired within the rocky recess.

He now perceived, through the branches of the trees by which it was sheltered, that Anna returned to him, accompanied by another person; he did not at first discover that it was Sir Walter d'Anghien. But no sooner had he recognised his nephew, on his turning by a projection of the rock which faced the entrance, than a thrill of surprise passed through his veins; it could hardly be termed the surprise of pleasure, for Anna leant on the arm of Sir Walter, nor did she leave it till actually within the recess. An involuntary sigh escaped from the bosom of Lewis; but his better purpose induced him to suppress his feelings, and he received his nephew with every mark of kindness.

From Sir Walter he now learnt that having been unable to arrange with Von Artaveld any terms that would prove desirable to the Earl, their conference had ended in disappointment; and that he had accepted the permission given to him to quit Bruges in safety, on the condition that he should depart thence instantly, and alone. Sir Walter had heard it rumoured that the Earl

had escaped from the palace, in company with some female of his household. He guessed this to be Anna; and, in the hope to gain some intelligence of them, he had purposely lingered without the walls of Bruges, till, observing that he was watched by some of the party of the White Hoods, he judged it more prudent to retire into the wood. There he had seen two persons, whose faces were concealed from observation; he hoped to find in them his friends, but he endeavoured to ascertain the truth before he ventured to make himself known. From this motive he had followed Anna through the wood, till the sound of her voice assured him who she was, and he instantly presented himself before her.

The Earl expressed himself well satisfied with the fortunate chance which had brought his nephew to his assistance. The means to be pursued to ensure their escape from so dangerous a neighbourhood was next taken into consideration. They agreed that they would rest for some time in the wood, and towards the evening sally forth to continue their journey on

the road to Lille. Anna, exhausted by the fatigues she had undergone, obtained some sleep within the recess, whilst Sir Walter and his uncle watched without, and debated upon their affairs. Thus passed the early part of the day; and about the hour of noon they partook of what remained of their scanty provisions, slaked their thirst from the water of the rock, and prepared to continue their route.

During this interval, Sir Walter d'Anghien had forborne to take advantage of his uncle's distressed situation to press upon him his suit respecting Anna, and he hoped that, should he succeed in restoring Lewis to that power of which he had been so suddenly and so violently deprived, the generosity of the Earl would induce him to award Anna to his hopes, as some requital of his services. Lewis also avoided any conversation that might lead to the subject. His remorse, his resolution to act from better motives than heretofore towards both Anna and his nephew, had proceeded from the alarm of those powerful emotions men often experience in the hour of calamity; but they were too recent, too

painful, to make a conduct wholly disinterested on the part of the Earl, either natural or pleasing to his feelings. For the present, therefore, he was content to mean no ill, and to rest silent.

The little party speedily passed the wood. For some hours they walked on without meeting any serious interruption; but, faint from fatigue, and refreshed but little by their scanty meal, they all were anxious to find some place of rest for the night. Anna, moreover, before they came in sight of either town or village, seemed ready to sink down with fatigue. Sir Walter, distressed at her situation, observing a horse grazing in the field of an old cottager, whose little dwelling stood near the way-side, proposed to purchase it, to help his companion on her journey. The old man at length agreed to part with it for about treble its value. The cottager, who seemed a shrewd fellow, narrowly eyed the party. His manner implied suspicion; and the singular bargain made by such poor travellers, on casually passing his door, was in itself sufficient to excite at least curiosity. When they were

about to depart, "It is likely," said he, "you may meet horses in your road nothing better than mine, that you may think so sorry a beast; for, saving that it is now old, and something hard worked, and blind of one eye, and a little touched in the wind, there was never, though I say it, a better horse in all this country than old Surefoot, in times gone by. But, as I said before, you may meet horses in your way not a whit better; for those who went yesterday from Ghent to Lille, looked as if neither horse nor rider had known what it was to have a belly-full for many a long day. Mayhap they may come back in better condition than they went out; for people say that the starved men of Ghent last night beat the fat citizens of Bruges."

"Did any of the citizens of Ghent, then, go to Lille yesterday," enquired the Earl, "before the attack was made on Bruges?"

"Aye, a few of the old ones did," said the cottager; "for they thought it would go hard with Von Artaveld and his men, and so they set on to Lille, to try if they could do any thing to mollify the hearts of some of the good citizens

of that place, to plead for them to the Earl to save Ghent from famine. And sure they looked more like starving men who went to beg an alms, than burghers of such a place as Ghent used to be. They had all of them on a white hood; so, should you meet them returning back again, take heed of yourselves, if you be of my lord's party; for the White Hoods, they say, are likely now to pluck down the finest hood, be it of purple or scarlet, that ever sat upon a court head."

The travellers bade him adieu; and placing Anna upon the animal, Sir Walter led it by a halter, for bridle there was none, and the Earl walking by her side, they thus continued their journey, till twilight warned them to seek some shelter for the coming night.

It was now the hour when objects in the landscape can alone be distinguished in broad masses, or by their general outline; when every variety of colour assumes a uniform tint of one deep and dusky hue; when stillness and silence succeed to the bustle of the day. The party again paused to deliberate upon what measures they

should take to obtain rest and refreshment. At a short distance they perceived a house, through whose casements several lights were seen to twinkle, as they spread their beams far across a level and open country, the usual character of Flemish scenery.

"Surely," said the Earl, "I should know that house. It must be a little inn that stands in the direct road between Bruges and Lille. It is too poor to be much frequented; and, disguised as I am in this artificer's apparel, I think I may pass unnoticed. If we seek shelter there, we may seem as poor travellers upon a journey. Do you, Sir Walter, draw your hood, like mine, close over your head, and we will venture to take refuge at this house for a few hours; we may rise with the dawn to continue our way."

They all agreed to the proposal, and the little party soon reached the door of the inn. The host speedily appeared, and both by his alacrity (although an aged man), his accent, and the volubility of his speech, it seemed he was a native of France and not of Flanders. He gladly undertook to accommodate the whole party for

the night. There was a civility of manner in his speech, which even in those remote times, distinguished the nation to which he owed his birth, as being of a breeding far beyond the Flemings.

As he stept forward to conduct the guests to the only chamber on the ground floor, besides the kitchen, they observed, in crossing the latter apartment, two men and a woman, seated round a table, who wore upon their heads the symbol of their party — the well-known white hood. Anna shuddered; nor did the Earl feel at all pleased to find himself so near his foes, uncertain if these were all he had to fear, or if others of the same band lurked in the neighbourhood. But retreat was now too late; it would only excite suspicion. The travellers, therefore, past on in silence to the chamber destined for their use.

It was a miserable apartment, and evidently shewed that no neat-handed Flemish maiden here ruled the household. Every thing around bespoke negligence; every thing in the room was black with dirt; the door was in a dilapidated

state, and a wretched bed stood within a small recess, partially concealed by an old curtain, that drew across the front part from one side to the other. Here the party sat down, whilst the host placed a lamp upon the table, and received a brief order to bring them such refreshment as the house afforded. Sir Walter intimated that they were travellers, who must depart early in the morning, since their affairs would not admit of delay.

It is as difficult to disguise the accent and manner natural to persons of birth and education, as it is impossible for the vulgar to assume the manners of their betters. Sir Walter's cloak was plain, and the whole of his dress in disorder, and Anna and the Earl were carefully attired, so as to disguise their real condition. But there was nothing about them of common breeding, and the French host, a lively and shrewd old man, accustomed daily to witness the boorish air and speech of the country people, or the important self-sufficiency of the wealthy traders, soon entertained a suspicion that his guests were not what they seemed to be. He

had no intention, however, to communicate his suspicions to any but the party themselves, and this was rather in his manner than in his words, for he treated them with the utmost deference and respect.

The table was now covered, and a flagon of wine produced, of a better quality than so poor an hostelri seemed capable of affording. When supper was ended, Sir Walter d'Anghien requested that Anna might be accommodated with another apartment, declaring that himself and his companion would pass the night where they were. The host said he was sorry that he had but an indifferent chamber for her service, but that he would conduct her to it whenever she pleased, for there was no one in the house to attend upon the guests except himself — the offices of host, hostess, and all others, being represented in his own single person.

Anna expressed her willingness to retire as soon as possible, and bidding a good repose to her companions, the old man took up the lamp he had trimmed for her use, and stept forward to guide her to her chamber. In order to do

so, it was necessary to cross the kitchen. This was a painful circumstance, for Anna dreaded being discovered by any of the persons who were there seated, lest they might belong to the party of Du Bois. But there was no remedy; and, drawing her mantle close around her head, she passed on as quickly as she was able, nor did she once venture to turn her head so as to look upon these fearful strangers. But what was her horror, when, as she gained the foot of the stairs she was to ascend, she heard the following words pronounced by the shrill accents of Ursula, who seemed to be engaged in vehement discourse with the White Hoods who were with her. "I tell you," said she, in her accustomed strain of mysterious speech, "I tell you, that the last hour of pride is at hand; and the lion and the lioness shall have a crimson scutcheon for their funeral honours."

CHAP. II.

Scarcely had Anna retired from the apartment, when the host returned to her companions, and first looking cautiously about him, closed the door, as well as its dilapidated condition would admit, and advancing towards Lewis, he thus addressed him, in a manner at once serious, respectful, and impressive.

"I am a Frenchman, and although necessity has reduced me to my present state, I was born to better fortune. I live, it is true, in Flanders, but I am not leagued with the White Hoods, nor am I an enemy to the Earl; though, for my own security, I am obliged to open my doors to his enemies." Here the host again looked around, and advancing nearer, he threw himself at the feet of Lewis de Male, and said, "Forgive me, my lord, if I tell you this is no place of security for you; since I know you to be the injured Earl of Flanders, and this noble youth

who bears you company, if I mistake not, is Sir Walter d'Anghien. I have often seen you ride by my doors, in your way to Lille, in better times than these are. I conjure you, then, not to despise the counsel of so poor a man as I am; I am old, too, but the tongue of the aged may sometimes do service, when their strength cannot avail. My lord, if you will observe my counsel, I may save you from all danger, and place you beyond the present reach of your foes."

"Rise," replied the Earl, "rise, good old man; I am, indeed, the unhappy prince of this distracted country. I will hear your counsel, and should it prove as useful to me as you aver, I will not hereafter be ungrateful."

"You must be gone from this place, my lord," rejoined the host, "as soon as it is possible. The men whom you saw with that wicked woman are two of the boldest of the White Hoods. I have learnt by their conversation, that they expect others of their party to join them early on the morrow, perhaps even to-night. Your safety, therefore, demands flight, and you must be gone before the day-

light exposes you to observation. You have but one horse for three persons; now, if Sir Walter d'Anghien will but do as I shall direct him, in less than two hours I could procure for you three as swift horses as ever were ridden by man; you have only to pay for them whatever may be demanded, without asking questions. If you have not the means to do so, I will be the voucher for your payment hereafter; and so you may mount, and all of you begone at the first dawn of light."

Sir Walter d'Anghien eagerly embraced the proposal, and begged the host to lose no time in pointing out the place where he was to find the horses.

"I will direct you," said the old man, "though I dare not leave the house to go along with you; but you cannot miss your way, it is so plain and easy to be found. I have a kinsman, who lives about a league from hence; he has been busy in these times, and has turned the little money he possessed to advantage, buying of the White Hoods, at different periods, some of the spoils they have taken by the chance of

war. Amongst other purchases he has possessed himself, for a mere trifle, of three fine horses, that belonged to some knights who were slain near Oudenarde; these animals my kinsman would gladly sell for a good price; have you the means to pay it?"

"I have," said the Earl. "Here, Sir Walter, take my purse, and lose no time in doing as this honest man directs."

"Go, then," continued the host to Sir Walter, "and keep on the direct road from this house towards Lille. You have nothing to do but to walk straight on; this you must do for a league, and the first house you come to on the left hand side, is the residence of my kinsman. Tell him you are one of a party of travellers who need horses for dispatch on business, and that I sent you to him, well knowing he could supply your need, and that, to avoid delay, I had advised you to strike the bargain at once. Follow me — I must now let you out; but do not speak to, or even look at the men who are seated in the kitchen. In less than two hours you may return with the horses, and then depart with my lord

and the fair damsel who is retired to rest; and I trust, before the morrow is sped, you will be safe, and far from this place of danger, and then you will remember, my lord, the old man who did you a service."

"I hope so," replied Lewis, "and that I shall remember it, in order to requite it."

"Farewell, my lord," said Sir Walter; "I shall use all dispatch, and, I trust, Heaven, who has thus unexpectedly placed within our power the means of flight, will render it effectual for your preservation. And now, honest man, lead the way; I will draw my hood close about my head, that those rebels, who are seated in the next apartment, may not recognize me as I pass out."

Sir Walter had departed; the host was again busied in attending upon his guests in the kitchen, who called for a fresh supply of wine; and the Earl of Flanders, in the hope to gain some rest before he continued his journey, threw himself upon the bed that stood in the chamber where he had supped. For some time his

thoughts dwelt with anxiety upon the singular and distressing state of his affairs, till, weary both in body and mind, exhausted nature claimed her due, and he sunk gradually into sleep. We must now for a moment return to Anna. As she passed through the kitchen, to ascend to the chamber where she was to pass the night, she paused for an instant at the foot of the stairs, in order to steal a hasty glance at the men who wore the fearful white hood. A lamp was burning upon the table round which they were seated, and plainly shewed the countenance of each. One of the men bore the appearance of uncommon strength and brutality in his person, this man she thought to be Oxhead, a rebel and a butcher of Ghent, and the other she knew to be Arnoul le Clerc, the villain who had decoyed her from the house of Sir Simon de Bête, on the day that he had attacked the abbey near Bruges; the same Arnoul who had encountered and escaped Sir Walter d'Anghien. Shocked to find herself so near him, she could not bear to look a second time, and hastily ascending the

stairs, entered her chamber, closed the door, and prepared herself to pass the night, not in sleep but in watchfulness.

To return to the party in the kitchen. As Oxhead and Arnoul le Clerc were refreshing themselves at the table, Ursula, the reputed witch, stood near them, leaning upon her staff, and speaking with her accustomed energy to her companions. The host had left the apartment to busy himself elsewhere, and to be on the watch for the return of Sir Walter with the horses.

"I reckon it," said Oxhead, who had been listening to Ursula, "that we last night gave such a knock-down blow to the fat calves of Bruges, that there was scarcely need for us to make this hasty journey, to carry the news of it to our friends at Courtray. And, for my own part, I had rather have staid quietly within the walls of the conquered city, to taste some of the jolly citizens' good wine, than have thus been sent off like a scout to look out for enemies that we may not find, and to tell news that will spread itself fast enough. But Peter du Bois

never rests quiet. He is just like a sheep-dog that worries while he drives, and will never let one rest lest the wolf comes to his fold, though there be ten dogs to one wolf, to throttle him if he but advance to do mischief."

"Peter du Bois did well," said Ursula. "He but obeyed my counsel, in sending you forth to bear this intelligence to our allies of Courtray. And I came thus far with you for a better purpose. To-morrow I depart for Tournay. I must now hold a conference with you alone, Arnoul le Clerc; but first, I have a word for your companion; listen, then, to me."

Oxhead was instantly all attention to her commands. He looked upon her as a slave upon a master, whose whip is ready to strike him; who obeys because he fears, and hates whilst he obeys his oppressor. Ursula again was about to speak aloud, when she was interrupted by a loud knocking upon the door of the inn. The host heard the call, and hastened to answer it. After a short interval, he returned, conducting into the kitchen five or six elderly men, each wearing a white hood. They seemed

to be upon a journey, and that they had stopped in their road to find quarters for the night.

Upon seeing them enter, Ursula dropped her voice, became silent, and throwing herself into a chair, she looked at her companions, and pressed her skinny finger upon her lip, in token that they should also be silent.

"Nay, mother," said Arnoul le Clerc, "you may speak out, for these men wear a white hood like ourselves."

Again the hag motioned silence, and one of the newly entered party was heard to say, in reply to some discourse addressed to him by the host, "Never trouble yourself about it, master host. No room, you say; all pre occupied. But I would have you to know, that whoever the guests may be they must give place, since we, who are now arrived, are certain honourable citizens of Ghent, returning from Lille, where we have been upon a deputation of some consequence. And that *I*, who demand a chamber, am no less a person than one of the chief supporters and officers of that honourable city of

Ghent; I, Sir Simon de Bête, knight, master of the goldsmiths' company, and ——"

"And a traitor and a fool to boot!" exclaimed Arnoul le Clerc, as he raised his voice, and turned towards the last speaker. "What! art thou alive, old coward? I thought that thy fat sides had long since made a banquet for the worms."

"And so they would, Master Arnoul le Clerc," answered Sir Simon, who turned pale at thus unexpectedly meeting his old enemy; "and so they would, if thy cruel attempt to kill me had answered thy intents. But I was saved; I am not dead; nor am I such a traitor, but I can rejoice to see my dear city of Ghent rescued from famine, though at the expence of Bruges. Nor am I such a fool, but that I have proposed and ventured on a deputation, which, had Von Artaveld failed in his enterprise, could alone have saved his head, and thine too, perhaps. Nor am I such a coward, but that I will defend my life against you, Arnoul le Clerc, should you dare again to venture on any second

attempt to take it from me. I am an armed man, and an honest one; so tolerably well prepared to meet a rogue."

"It shall not need," replied Arnoul le Clerc. "Our party have the upper-hand now; and a leader of the White Hoods may do what he lists, and never fear, and yet let such a fellow as you are breathe the air, and vapour about his dignities, without heeding him. I am in no wrath with you now; and so you may live to be hanged, if it please ye, for aught I care."

Sir Simon's anger was kindled at this speech, but he did not wish to enter upon any farther debate with Arnoul le Clerc. Indeed, the very sight of him had caused all Sir Simon's recently healed wounds to smart afresh; and turning to the host, he again demanded to be shewn into a chamber apart from the kitchen.

"I have but one," replied the old man, "and that is now occupied by a traveller."

"Nay, then," said Sir Simon, "he may, nevertheless, admit me to share it, for surely there must be room enough for us both; and I have no desire to remain here in company with

Master Arnoul le Clerc, nor with that old dame in the great chair. And the rest of the party, who cannot be accommodated in the house, have agreed to accept your offer of the barn and clean straw for their night's rest. But such accommodation will hardly suit with me, who have recently been employed in quality of chief of a deputation to Lille. So, honest host, open the door of yonder chamber, and I will civilly entreat this same traveller to give me entrance."

As Sir Simon advanced towards the door of the chamber in which Lewis de Male was now reposing, Ursula started up, and, raising her arm, she struck her staff upon the ground, and exclaimed, in a voice of fearful energy, "Forbear! No one shall enter that chamber who wears a white hood; for if he enters, my curse shall fall upon his head."

The party who accompanied Sir Simon, and were following him towards the door, slunk back at hearing these words; for Ursula's power was nothing doubted, even by the boldest among them. She had been employed by Du Bois to work artfully upon the minds of the people; and

by playing upon their credulity (in these benighted times), by her supposed magical endowments, she had obtained an extraordinary ascendancy, not only over the lower orders, but even over those of the better rank among the citizens of Ghent. She might be said, therefore, to be universally feared and obeyed.

Oxhead looked surprised at hearing the interdiction of Ursula, and Arnoul le Clerc seemed about to question her purpose, but ere he could do so, she bent her head, and whispered something in his ear. Arnoul immediately started forward, drew his dagger, and placed himself before the door of the chamber. "Ursula," said he, "declares to me that no White Hood can enter this chamber and live: a curse lies upon it for any of our people. Retire, then, citizens, and look you do not cross her will, for it is to her spells, more than to our arms, we owe the victory of last night — else had five thousand men never vanquished Bruges."

The worthy goldsmith looked astonished — his party alarmed — but they did not venture to question the will of Ursula. It was now settled

that Sir Simon should occupy the very room above stairs that had been designed for Arnoul le Clerc. He had himself offered it, a circumstance that greatly surprised the honest knight, who mistrusted any civility on the part of Arnoul, but he would not betray suspicion. However, he resolved to watch, and not to sleep, for he could not help thinking there was something very mysterious in Ursula's having forbid his entering the room occupied by the unknown traveller, and that some understanding upon that subject had been communicated to Arnoul by the whisper of the hag.

It had been before agreed, that the party who accompanied the worthy burgomaster, for want of room in the house, should pass the night in the barn, upon clean straw; and though Sir Simon did not much relish the lodging, yet, on second thoughts, he began to consider that this would be the safest place for himself, as it was better to be in company with his party, than to remain in the house with no other chance of society than such as might be found in a butcher, a cut-throat, and a witch.

But notwithstanding Sir Simon was neither a very bold, nor a very imprudent man, yet he could not tell why he felt reluctant to quit the house, at least till he had satisfied the strong curiosity he felt to know who the traveller might be. He longed to be peeping into the forbidden chamber, since Ursula's interdiction would have had no influence with him, were it not that she was in company with a fellow so desperate and so dangerous as Arnoul le Clerc. He now narrowly watched them, as his party drank some wine to refresh themselves before they retired for the night; and he once observed that the eye of the hag was fixed upon the door of the mysterious chamber, and that a look of intelligence passed between her and Arnoul le Clerc.

Sir Simon also had taken an opportunity of learning what he could on the subject (in an under voice,) from the host. The old man said that the traveller had retired to rest; that his companion was absent for a short time; and the fair damsel who bore them company was in a chamber above the kitchen. The words *fair*

U. OF ILL. LIB.

damsel had a singular effect in still farther exciting the interest of Sir Simon for the welfare of the travellers, who he could not help fancying were in some danger from the arts and plots of Ursula and her companion. But it was now time to retire into the barn; and though Sir Simon lingered as long as he could, fear so far mastered both curiosity and good-nature, that he willingly arose to follow his party to their lodging. The host led the way; and, still anxious to be of what service he could to the persons he supposed to be in jeopardy, Sir Simon prevailed with the old man to go in search of the traveller's *companion*, and to hasten his return to the inn. The host, who knew much better than Sir Simon could even guess, *who* the *traveller* really was, and his actual danger, at all hazards willingly left his house, and set off after Sir Walter d'Anghien, to let him know what had passed, and to hasten his return with the horses. Scarcely had Sir Simon, his party, and the host quitted the house, when Ursula arose from her seat, and bid Arnoul le Clerc follow her, directing Oxhead to watch, and on

no account to suffer any person to enter the chamber where the traveller was taking his repose. Ursula now opened the house-door, and passed out, attended by Arnoul.

The little inn, where the extraordinary scene we have just described took place, was a poor habitation constructed within the walls of what had once been a religious house, before it was destroyed by fire during some attack of the Flemish insurgents, in the days of Jacob Von Artaveld, father to the present rebel of that name.

Many ruins of the building and walls, and even of several chambers of the monastery, yet remained standing, though in a tottering and wretched state. One portion of these ancient buildings was peculiarly interesting and picturesque, and but little injured either by the hand of time or the violence of man. This portion was the cloisters. They ran round an open space of ground, their vaulted roof supported by open arches and columns of the finest Gothic workmanship.

The cloisters had a bad name, on account of

the last abbot of the house having been murdered beneath them, after a vain attempt to defend his sanctuary against the rebels. Superstition had peopled the dreary spot with her usual train of restless and perturbed spirits; and the old vaultings were said to return their echoes to such sounds as never came from human lips, nor from any thing created for human kind. After dark the peasant shunned the spot; and the boldest of the wicked, who neither believed nor feared anything divine or human during the light of day, turned aside to avoid the place, from an apprehension of something terrible, that has neither substance nor name — a fear which is as apt to steal over the spirits and unsettle the nerves of the professed infidel, as of the timid believer.

This was the spot to which Ursula led the way, followed by Arnoul le Clerc. She looked cautiously about her as she advanced, and at length having stopt at that part of the cloisters where the last abbot was said to have been slain, stood fixed in one of those attitudes she was accustomed to assume when dealing

forth her pretended spells. Her head was raised, and her eye fixed upon the dusky and impenetrable obscurity which totally veiled the more remote parts of the building. Nothing could be distinctly seen; since the only light that appeared was from the feeble rays of a few stars that glittered in the firmament, and chiefly derived their brilliancy by contrast with the surrounding darkness.

Arnoul stopt, and, all bold and daring as he was, he neither liked the place, the time, nor the person that he had to do with in the proposed conference. "Why are we here, dame?" said Arnoul; "and what is it you would tell me that could not be communicated either in or near the house? Speak quickly."

"This spot," said Ursula, in her usual emphatic tone — "this spot is fitting to the subject I have to speak upon. It is fitting for the purpose to be pursued; for here the spirits that obey my will keep their midnight vigils, and give their aid to deeds that no mortal power could effect without them."

"Come, come," replied Arnoul, "leave all

this wild way of talking of deeds and spirits. It may do with such fellows as Oxhead, and those foolish old citizens of Ghent and Bruges, but with me, who know both your tricks and your employer, there is no need for mumming. Tell me what it is, then, you would say, but do not waste more time about the devil or his dam — since wherever *you* are, dame, be it in a hostelrie, a charnel-house, or in a cloister, there will the evil one be for ever with you. And as to spirits, shew me the boldest of them, and I will take him by the nose, as I have heard old Father Gregory (my grandsire's confessor) say some saint of the olden time did the devil himself on the other side the water."

At this moment something rustled near; it might be the wind that stirred the ivy that hung thick about the walls. Arnoul started. Ursula raised her staff. "Hush! fool," said the hag to him, "do not mock the powers of the air, lest they blast you on the spot. I will bid them back now with my staff. Hear me, but be silent."

"Why, I am silent," said Arnoul le Clerc, in

a tone of voice much lower than in his last speech; "and so tell me quickly what you would communicate, and let us go hence, and if you get me back again, why then the devil (with reverence be his name spoken,) shall catch me if he can."

"Arnoul," replied Ursula, "it is not only to meet my friendly and favoured spirits that I am here. It is, because that which I have to tell thee, may meet no mortal ear save thine own. And well I know, there is not one amongst all that crew of old and idiot White Hoods, who return as deputies from Lille, that would venture near this spot after dark for the worth of his city. I am, therefore, here, that no eavesdropper may now listen to what I have to tell."

"A better place for telling a secret, or for cutting a throat, could scarcely be chosen, mother," said Arnoul. "Go on, then; I am all attention."

"Mark me well," replied Ursula; "I am the agent and friend of Du Bois. I act for him, and with him; and much is done that we both conceal from the knowledge of Von Artaveld,

for he has too much in him of that phantom called honour: a thing that men admire, as they would a picture that looks well, but can neither think nor act; a very thing of shadows and painted shows. Von Artaveld would not join in our plans; he is, therefore, kept ignorant of them. Du Bois has agents everywhere. By one of them we have learnt, that Margaret Countess of Artois has been in secret carrying on a league with the French court, through the ministry of her tool, Gilbert Matthew; and that she has so far succeeded, that the youthful King Charles the Sixth of France is now actually advancing towards Tournay, with a band of chosen knights, there to join the Countess, who has summoned her own vassals of Artois to flock round the royal banner, in order to form an alliance, and to march at once into Flanders, to give battle to the White Hoods, and restore Lewis to his power and his earldom. Hitherto Lewis de Male has been purposely kept in ignorance of these plans of his wily mother. She would not have him know them, till such time as all should be ripe for action, lest he

should interfere, and insist upon taking the command of the men at arms; a station, in which the prudent Countess, and the cunning Duke of Burgundy, (who treat Lewis more as a vassal than an injured prince,) would fear to trust him. Du Bois has also learnt, but last night, that the Countess, seeing all was prepared, was about to communicate her plans to her son, when the sudden attack on Bruges prevented her doing so, and compelled her to flight."

"And how did Du Bois know all this?" enquired Arnoul, "when myself and Von Artaveld knew nothing about the matter. Has any of those friends of yours, that wait hereabouts, helped him to the knowledge of this affair?"

"Du Bois," replied Ursula, "has learnt all by human means. He last night took prisoner a French herald, who was found lurking in Bruges, ready to depart. He seized this man and his papers, with certain letters written by the Countess of Artois, and addressed to the

King of France, Sir Oliver de Clisson the constable, and the Duke of Burgundy."

"And wherefore," again enquired Arnoul, "wherefore should these circumstances now only be made known to me, and by you, and at such a time, and in such a place? There was something strange, methought, in your conduct, but now, when you whispered in my ear, that as I would thrive and gain all I hoped to do in Flanders, I should not suffer the old Sir Simon and his friends to see the traveller in yonder chamber. What did you mean by this? There is some mystery in all you either say or do."

"I will quickly expound all," answered Ursula. "I go to-morrow to meet the Countess on her road. It was her express desire that I should see her before the attack on Bruges. I will meet her. She does not know how far I am in the interest of Du Bois. She once bought of me a certain drug, that did its duty on an enemy of mine as well as of her's; so she thinks that she may consult, nay, command me, when she lists. Margaret will gladly learn from me how

the Heavens look upon her purposes. I will meet her, aye, and counsel her too," said Ursula, in a tone of voice that sounded as if the speaker already enjoyed an internal triumph of deadly malice.

Again there was a low sound that rustled near. Guilt and fear are never separated. The least movement awakens the latter in the bosom where the former inhabits.

"There, again," said Arnoul le Clerc; "did you hear nothing? I am sure that was a noise as if some one lurked near."

"No," replied Ursula, "no; it was no sound of this world that met your ear. It came from the spirit of the air; he who rides on the atom's point, sails with the mote that dances in the sunbeam, whose voice can equal the thunder in its loudest fury, or can whisper lower than the lightest murmur of the breeze. It is Orthon who now speaks; he who weeps when maidens breathe their prayers, and laughs as he howls despair to the ear of the dying sinner."

In spite of all his profligacy, a cold shudder stole over the frame of the bold Arnoul le Clerc,

as Ursula described the properties of the wicked spirit, whom she averred (and in all probability believed herself,) now lingered near her.

"Come, haste to finish your tale, mother," said Arnoul, "and let us go hence; at least, let me go — and you may stay and dance with your friends upon atoms or besoms, if you list, so I be clear from your infernal rites; for they do not suit with such fellows as I am, who have no armour about me forged in hell. But, with your leave, I will first take a peep behind that column; for I am more apt to believe, after all — " (continued Arnoul, who regained his courage at hearing the sound of his own voice,) "I am more disposed to credit spirits that inhabit the flesh, and walk upon two legs, than those of the air who sail upon wings like a butterfly."

Arnoul shook off his fears, boldly drew his dagger, and advanced to the column. He looked about it, and behind it, but there was nothing to be found, except an owl that quitted the nest she had made amidst the branches of the ivy, as Arnoul disturbed them in his search.

"It is the bird of night," said Ursula, "an

omen of evil, but not to us. Now, Arnoul, are you satisfied; or will you still be incredulous as to my power, or that of the spirits who assist it? This very bird is sent to me."

"I never doubted as to who were *your* friends, dame," answered Arnoul, "but I something question their palpable and bodily appearance; but go on."

"Mark me, still, then," said Ursula; "I have made known these circumstances respecting the French alliance to you, in order to give you a proof of the necessity of doing what I am now about to direct. But first tell me, do you wish Du Bois to thrive, that he may execute his long-laid scheme to seize hereafter upon the Earl's power and his lands? Do you wish success to the White Hoods?"

"Do I wish it!" replied Arnoul, "when I know that I am so necessary to Du Bois, that he can do nothing without me, and that I am to be second to himself in Flanders; whilst you, worthy dame Ursula, as a reward for playing your part so well, you are to have plenty of gold, and one of the Earl's palaces, if you like it,

for the devils to dance in, as they have often done before, with courtiers for their partners, and nobles to play the pipe."

"Well, then," said Ursula, "all depends upon yourself. I can at this hour place *all* within your grasp."

"Who? *you* do this, dame?" replied Arnoul, with a scornful laugh. "*You?* No, no, good mistress of toads and black books, there needs something more than your skill, though you are well enough in your way; but there must go a little of Arnoul le Clerc's wit, and a good deal of his daring, to the account, before he writes himself second in the good country of Flanders."

"Indeed!" said Ursula. "Are you sure that I can so little serve you? Obey me, and in less than an hour Anna shall be yours."

"What?" exclaimed Arnoul; "how? speak! Anna! the lovely daughter of John Lyon? She who escaped me when I was about to reap the richest reward of all my toils? Prove but the truth of this assertion, and I will do your bidding, though it be to serve the fiend. Give me but Anna."

"Look up, then," said Ursula; "do you mark the ray of light which glimmers through the casement of yonder window in the house? You may descry it through the aperture of these dismantled walls."

"Aye, I mark it," replied Arnoul, "but what of that?"

"That light is burning in the chamber of her you would possess — of Anna," answered the witch. "Shall it, ere an hour be past — shall it light you to her?"

"Let it but do so," said Arnoul, "and, though it should afterwards fire a city, I would call it the dearest flame that ever burnt for me."

"But something must be done first, that I am about to name," replied Ursula. "Darkness must know the deed, whilst light shall shew you its reward. The maiden came not hither *alone*, *one* of her companions is still within the house. Did you observe them as they entered?"

"No," said Arnoul, "I only saw a woman in a mantle, attended by two men in poor apparel. I did not see the faces of any of them; I thought they might be some of the poor people who had

fled from Bruges, not worth our notice — I saw them not distinctly."

"But I did," said Ursula; "I caught a view of that fair creature's countenance, fair as the fiend would have it when woman first tempted man to evil. I saw too, that the dishevelled locks, the closed hood, the mean apparel, could ill conceal from my searching eye the heir and lord of Flanders."

"What! Lewis de Male?" exclaimed Arnoul, "is he the traveller?"

"Aye, even he," said Ursula; "he was left in the chamber when his companion went forth."

"Then I can perfectly comprehend," answered Arnoul, "why you forbid its being entered by that butter-hearted fool, Sir Simon, and his old dotard companions. They wear white hoods, it is true; but they do no good with them. They but hang them on their heads, as if only to hide the ears, as well as to guard the brains of an ass."

"If Lewis were once dead," continued Ursula, "the French alliance would come to nothing. These Frenchmen will enter Flanders to restore

Lewis to his lost power; but once destroy the head, and the members of the body will fall of themselves. Were Lewis dead, the men of Ghent could make their peace with France on easy terms; the payment of an annual tribute would hush all disputes. Lewis gone, and Anna is in your power; bear her from this place; and when you carry to Du Bois the news of the Earl's death, he will gladly give you a silly girl as an earnest of farther reward."

"I understand you," said Arnoul, "but how is it to be done? Those old White Hoods, it is true, have left the house for the night — they cannot interrupt us. Let me think. Oxhead we may make a useful instrument; he shall guard the door, that no one enter till all is over, and we are gone. But then, the host, though an old, yet he is a lusty fellow; he may not like the deed; how shall we dispose of him?"

"He was not within the house when we left it," said Ursula; "if he return, I will send him out of the way to prepare for our departure. You must be quick. You have but to secure the door, and then do what you list. Only use

dispatch, lest the companion of Lewis de Male, who came with him, and quitted him, (most likely for some purpose to forward his escape,) should chance to return before all is over."

"I will use dispatch," replied Arnoul, "I will do it immediately; but first, let us think upon the manner of it. You had best draw Oxhead aside, and let him know just as much of the business as it may be necessary. The fellow is brute enough, as stubborn as any beast he ever led to the slaughter; he is thick-skulled, too, therefore a chosen agent with Du Bois and myself, when we need a strong arm without a too curious head. Place him as a guard without the door of the hostelrie till all is over. He will obey your directions, he will never question your purpose if you fool him; add but a curse to your injunctions, should he disobey them, and he will not be willing to meet that as his reward. When all is ended, I will make him believe it was but a plan of my own to bear off a girl that pleased me — nor shall Anna now escape me. Let us instantly prepare; and now, my trusty dagger, I will not again sheath

thee till thou hast done a deed to give success to the White Hoods, power to thy master, and beauty to his arms. "Come, on, then," he continued, as he addressed Ursula, "come on, thou best of sybils, henceforth thy art, like a priest's sanctity, shall be canonized, so it but this night avail thee."

"It shall avail," said Ursula; "all will be your own." Arnoul and Ursula now quitted the deep shade beneath the cloisters where they had been conversing, and came into the square which they surrounded. On turning their steps towards the house, Arnoul paused a moment, and said, in a graver tone of voice than he had yet used during their discourse: "Whilst you direct Oxhead in what he is to do, Ursula, I will take a cup of wine, for, I know not how it is, my spirit seems darkened to-night, like the colour of the time; for though I have struck down many a man in my day, yet I never yet had to deal with one who may be sleeping. In other affairs, I might lose my own life, and that steeled me. But, I know not how it is, I believe I am a child yet, for what is a sleeping

man more than a dead man, since both are senseless, motionless alike? I will not fear then to look upon him — no, I will look at nothing but the dagger."

"Give me thy dagger," said Ursula, "and take my knife in exchange, it will be a surer instrument, it is *poisoned.*"

"Give it me, then," said Arnoul, and the exchange was instantly made between them, "Now for the house," he continued, "and a cup of wine, and then — what then? why, Anna is my own. I will think of her."

With these words he set forward, and the wicked Ursula and her profligate companion slowly and cautiously returned towards the house. They slunk along the most circuitous path, and kept under the deep shade of the old walls, as if afraid lest the common darkness of night was insufficient to shroud them from observation. Fear is the constant attendant of the guilty, and follows their footsteps, even as the shadow cast by their own bodies on the ground.

CHAP. III.

Before we continue to follow the steps of Arnoul and Ursula, we must return to Anna, and state some circumstances that took place previous to the scene in the cloisters just related. Anna had been informed by the aged host, (ere he went forth to hasten the return of Sir Walter d'Anghien,) that he had put his guests in a way to obtain horses for their departure as soon as it was day-break, and that Sir Walter was already gone to procure the animals, that all might be in readiness, since he did not think it safe for the little party to remain in his house. The old man assured her of his fidelity, and that he would do all in his power to save the Earl, whom he had recognised, as soon as he laid aside the hood that concealed his face in order to partake of the supper that the host had set before him.

Anna thanked the honest old man for his

kindness to her and to her companions, said she would hold herself prepared to depart the instant Sir Walter should return, and bidding him a good night, she once more closed the door of her chamber, as the host descended the stairs.

Left to her own reflections, her thoughts dwelt with anxiety and dread upon the scene she had witnessed in passing through the kitchen, and upon that which had since occurred, and was made known to her, as briefly as it could be stated, by the host. One circumstance he had *not* mentioned in his haste; it was, that Sir Simon was arrived with a party of his friends, who had taken up their night's lodging in the barn, and that by *his* advice the host was himself going in search of the traveller's companion, in consequence of Ursula's singular conduct in forbidding any one to enter the room in which the traveller was taking his repose. Of Sir Simon's arrival she was ignorant, else how would the heart of Anna have rejoiced to find herself once more so near the worthy man who had been to her as a father. Every particular of

Ursula's conduct, and Arnoul le Clerc's, had been stated to her. In all probability the host, in the midst of his alarm, had not attended to or even heard the *name* of the worthy goldsmith, or it is likely he would have repeated it, whilst relating to Anna the occurrences that had happened. It was not without a feeling of horror that Anna had recognised the countenance of the bold Arnoul le Clerc whilst passing on to her chamber; and the words uttered by Ursula, in her usual strain of pretended prophecy, dwelt upon her memory. Ursula had said, "that the hour was come, when the lion and the lioness should fall." Anna could not help thinking that this mysterious speech implied danger to the Earl of Flanders and his mother the Countess of Artois, since the Lion sable was the well-known cognizance of their house.

Anna, whose faculties were at all times acute and imaginative, at this hour of danger became attentive to the least circumstance from which she might gather any information relative to what was passing among the enemies of the Earl and Sir Walter. Her apprehensions were

awakened, and fancy conjured up a thousand vague alarms on their account — alarms too justly founded upon her knowledge of the characters both of Ursula and Arnoul le Clerc; for what arts and what deeds of wickedness might not be expected from those whose lives were passed in the practice of iniquity?

She pondered in her thoughts again and again the extraordinary scene the host had just related to her. "For what purpose could Ursula have forbidden any one to enter the chamber where Lewis was reposing?" She asked herself the question, and her judgment assured her that it could be for no *good* purpose whatever; since Ursula was never known to do good to any living creature. The more Anna considered the subject, the more she was convinced that this circumstance, and the wicked woman's dark speech, inferred some impending danger to Lewis.

These thoughts banished from her mind all other considerations. She could take no rest; but determined to pass the night in watchfulness, and, recommending herself to Heaven, according to her constant practice, she took from

her bosom the little crucifix that she always wore next to her heart — she pressed it to her lips, and thought, why should she fear for herself or others, since the eye of Heaven was always, and everywhere, upon her?

The performance of the duties of the religion in which she had been educated gave her renewed strength of spirits; and having trimmed her lamp, she placed it on a table, and walked softly towards the window. She then unfastened the casement, and looked out, but the darkness of the night prevented her seeing any thing but such objects as were close to the house, and these were imperfectly visible. She perceived that her window was at no great height from the ground, and immediately over the door that opened from the kitchen.

Whilst Anna leant upon the window, she heard this door open. Fearful of being observed, yet desirous to know who it might be that issued forth at such an hour, Anna drew back, but left open the casement, and fixed herself so close to it, by the side of the wall, that she thought she might hear if any one spoke below. She

listened in breathless attention. She could distinguish the voices of Ursula and Arnoul le Clerc, but their conversation was carried on in too low a tone for her to make out the purport of their discourse. A few unconnected words met her ear; and at length she distinctly heard Ursula direct Arnoul to follow her to the ruined cloisters, where she would communicate to him something of importance.

Anna's imagination immediately connected this communication with the previous circumstances that had so lately been detailed to her by the host; and she was convinced that whatever Ursula intended to unfold, it referred to the Earl, perhaps to Sir Walter d'Anghien, and also to herself. Terrified and alarmed for their safety, she sickened with apprehension, and remained motionless where she stood, till she heard the retreating footsteps of Ursula and Arnoul. They at length were lost in the distance.

She felt doubtful how to act. Sir Walter, she knew, was not returned; and the time of his return was uncertain. How could she tell

but that some unforeseen occurrence might delay him? And what might happen during the interval, she feared to think upon. At all events it appeared absolutely necessary that she should apprise the Earl of her fears and suspicions. They might possibly be able to leave the house together, to follow to the place where Sir Walter d'Anghien was gone before — they might meet him on his return. Let what would happen, she wished the Earl to be upon his guard, and to know the few, but remarkable, circumstances which had so alarmed her for his safety.

Governed by these considerations, Anna now resolved that she would attempt to descend into the kitchen and seek the friendly host. Should he be there, he might communicate her fears to Lewis; but if the old man should be absent, then she herself would warn the Earl of his danger. With this intent, she unbarred her chamber-door, and softly stepping out, she reached the head of the stairs, whence she had a full view of the kitchen below. She there saw Oxhead. He was alone, and seated before the table where his companions had supped. A

large and heavy axe, his usual weapon of defence, lay before him. The brutal rebel was engaged in drinking from a flagon that he held in both hands, and he appeared already to be affected by its potent contents, since their motion was unsteady as he raised it to his lips.

In her anxiety to serve Lewis, she had forgotten this man; his presence, therefore, was an insurmountable bar to her purpose. She did not dare descend, since she justly apprehended that he would prevent her going to the Earl after the commands and interdiction of Ursula respecting that chamber, the door of which stood immediately facing the seat where Oxhead had taken his station. Again, she thought of seeking the host, but feared that doing so, after having retired for the night, must excite suspicion in her enemies; and this, instead of preventing, might hasten, any evil plan they meditated against the Earl.

Anna retired again into her apartment, and again resolved to be watchful. The better to effect her purpose with security to herself, she now placed the lamp upon the hearth, and hung

before it, on the back of a chair, the covering that was upon the bed. Convinced that she could not now be seen from without, she once more ventured to the window, and after being stationed there for some time, her eye became accustomed to the obscurity of the night, and she could now distinguish several objects which seemed before lost in darkness. She observed a portion of the ruined monastery, within whose walls the little hostelerie had been built from the fragments of the ruins, and she thought she could distinguish the shadowy forms of two persons, who seemed to issue from beneath an archway of the dilapidated structure.

As she looked with fixed earnestness upon the spot, she heard footsteps; they drew nearer, and she could now not only clearly see the figures of two persons advancing, but could also hear the voices of Ursula and Arnoul le Clerc. They seemed in earnest conference. In a few minutes they were beneath her window; and these words, uttered by Arnoul, distinctly met her ear, "I will but see if all is safe without. If the sleepers in the barn are secure, then no

one can give an alarm. Wait for me; I will return instantly."

Alarmed at hearing these words, which she doubted not referred to the immediate execution of some plan against Lewis de Male, she resolved, at all hazards, to quit her chamber, and to seek him. Anna directly left the window, opened her door, and, with a noiseless step, once more stole to the head of the stairs. She now saw, by the light of the lamp that was burning in the kitchen, Oxhead still seated in the same chair, and sleeping as profoundly as fatigue, a heavy temperament, and potent drink, could make him. Anna lost not a moment; and swiftly descending, she crossed the kitchen with the utmost rapidity, gained the door of the Earl's chamber, and instantly entered.

There was no light within this apartment, for the lamp was extinguished; but it received a faint illumination from that which burnt in the kitchen, as the door remained half closed. Lewis de Male was sleeping upon the miserable pallet, where he had thrown himself after parting from Sir Walter, without having removed

any part of his attire. An old curtain hung half-drawn a thwart a recess in the room within which the bed was placed.

There was a noble character in the features of Lewis de Male, at all times striking, and which the mean apparel he now wore, his recent fatigue, and disordered state of mind, could not destroy but his cheek was pale from the anxiety of his spirits and the exertion of his body; and his sleep, haunted by unquiet dreams, was neither calm nor sound. The brow was knit, the lips moved, and his hand, which lay extended on the bed, was firmly clenched, as it still grasped the dagger he carried with him as the only weapon of defence.

Anna stole softly towards the bed, with the intent to awaken the Prince, but as she drew nigh, he started in his sleep, and muttered something; he seemed to be labouring under the impression of some uneasy vision of his mind. Fearing lest the Earl, in this disturbed state, might utter some exclamation which would rouse Oxhead, Anna marked well the position of the bed, and then stole back to close the door

communicating with the kitchen, ere she ventured to awake the Earl. Having effected this, with the utmost caution she once more turned her steps towards the bed. She was now in total darkness, but having previously observed where it stood, she succeeded in finding her way back to it. As she passed the recess, (within which the bed was placed,) she put her hand upon the curtain, and was about to awaken Lewis, when she heard a slight noise, and instantly after the door of the inn was softly opened, and then shut.

A cold tremour stole over the frame of Anna; and fervently pressing her hands together, she faintly murmured, "Oh God, protect me; they are come, they will murder him." As Anna stood trembling and listening, doubtful how to act, and ready to sink down with apprehension, she heard a stealthy step advancing towards the door of the chamber, accompanied with low whispers from the kitchen. Soon after she could plainly hear Ursula awaken Oxhead, and immediately he seemed to quit the house; for the outer door was again opened, and then

shut. All this was effected with dispatch, and (excepting an exclamation from Oxhead when he was awakened) with the least possible noise.

The steps were now close at the chamber door, the latch moved, some one was about to enter. Despair suggested the only means of self-preservation that remained for Anna. She quickly placed herself (behind the curtain that hung across the recess) on the left hand of the Earl's bed. This curtain was so old, that in several places it was torn and tattered; and any one who stood behind it, might observe through one of the many rents what passed in the chamber, without being seen by others. The door now slowly opened, and again the lamp in the kitchen shewed imperfectly the objects within the Earl's apartment. Anna kept her station. She could see without being herself observed, and she now saw two persons standing before her in the door-way. As their backs were turned towards the light, she could not distinguish the faces of either; but she knew too well the tall figure of Arnoul le Clerc, and

the dark dress and form of Ursula, to be mistaken in either of them.

For a moment they neither moved nor spoke. Anna suppressed, as much as possible, her respiration; she feared even to breathe. A cold and damp moisture overspread her face, whilst every nerve in her body trembled; yet she summoned all her resolution to her aid, and determined to observe, in silence, what passed. "I am not seen," thought Anna; "now, now let me but put my trust in Heaven, and in these most terrible moments of trial, I may, perhaps, be made an instrument of mercy." The thought was instantaneous; the effect of it was powerful.

There is no feeling which, in hours of trial, can so strongly nerve the arm, and lend assurance to the purpose of a good mind, as a firm and practical trust in Providence. To feel that God is *with* us, to believe that he will *act* for us, is to be armed in proof, and with a strength that can beat back the assaults of despair, and preserve to the mind that coolness of spirit, that capability of thinking, so necessary, in

moments of extreme danger, to render courage useful, or innocence fearless. Anna *had* this trust in Providence, and now, instead of uttering one exclamation, or making a single movement, which must betray herself, and could not save the Earl, she stood fixed, motionless, and watchful.

At length, Ursula said to Arnoul, in a low voice, "All is silent; he sleeps; now is the time."

"I will take away his dagger first," replied Arnoul. "He is armed."

"No, no," said Ursula, "do not go near him till you strike the blow, else he may awake and struggle with you."

"He shall awake in hell then," answered Arnoul. "This shall do it."

On saying this, Arnoul advanced directly towards the bed, bent forward, and raised his arm to strike; but even at the instant he was about to deal the blow, Anna started from her concealment, rushed out, and struck the arm of Arnoul le Clerc with so much firmness, that, unprepared for such an attack, his arm was

forced back upon his bosom as he bent forward, and the point of the knife slightly wounded him in the breast.

Before the villain could shake off Anna's hold, or recover from his surprise, by her cries of "Murder! murder!" she awakened Lewis, who sprung up and seized his dagger, exclaiming, as he did so, as if still under the influence of his dream, (which corresponded with the real and terrific scene before him,) "Murder! where? what? I know it! I grappled with the villain; I had all but beat him down."

Whilst Lewis spoke thus wildly, he looked distractedly around, impressed with that sensation between terror and surprise, which persons are apt to experience when they awake in a strange place, where they have laid down to take rest under circumstances of anxiety. But he was soon recalled to his perfect senses, by the violent assault of Arnoul le Clerc, who, having at length shaken off Anna, sprang upon the Earl, with the intent to stab him ere he could recover from his alarm. Ursula, in the meantime, had retreated to the house-door to call in the assistance

of Oxhead, who she had there stationed as a guard to prevent interruption from without.

The Earl, who neither wanted courage nor resolution to defend himself against his enemies, closed in with Arnoul le Clerc, and, aided by that supernatural strength which despair, like the ragings of a fever, will often impart, he became strong as his fierce opponent. Grappling with the villain, he held him by the throat, whilst he wrenched the knife from his hand; but in doing so Lewis dropt his own dagger. The struggle continued.

At this moment Ursula returned, followed by Oxhead, who, still under the influence of his debauchery, held his axe in his grasp, and, with a stupid gaze and an unsteady step, advanced to give his assistance, more like one who is about to take a part in a drunken brawl than to become the instrument of a daring and determined purpose. Lewis in an instant observed the state of his new assailant, and finding that he should have two ruffians to deal with instead of one, whilst he was himself unarmed, he suddenly struck with his clenched hand so

violent a blow upon the head of Arnoul le Clerc, that the assassin, stunned by the force of it, fell senseless upon the ground.

Lewis bent forward to snatch up his dagger; but ere he could recover himself again, Oxhead was before him, and, with a bitter oath, prepared to strike him dead. But Heaven again interfered to preserve the Earl, for at this instant, some one, who had entered the kitchen, came suddenly upon the wretch, and interposed between him and Lewis de Male. Oxhead instantly turned upon his new assailant, but, stupified with the effects of strong drink, he was no equal match for the brave and temperate Sir Walter d'Anghien, (for it was he who had entered the house). The contest was soon ended, and Oxhead rolled at the feet of his opponent, in the agonies of the last struggle, from which he was speedily released by death.

Sir Walter now advanced towards the Earl, who had placed himself before Anna, as if to guard her from danger. He was about to speak, when Arnoul le Clerc, who had been stunned, but not killed, by the blow he had received, once

more sprang upon his feet, and attempted to seize the axe that had fallen from the hand of Oxhead. Sir Walter prevented his purpose, seized upon Arnoul, and held the point of his sword at his throat, as he said, "Yield thee, villain; make but the least attempt at self-defence, and my sword shall end your life on the instant."

Ursula, who now saw all her hopes were frustrated, quickly advanced towards the door, in order to save herself by flight; but the Earl rushed before her, closed the door, and forced the wretched woman back into the very chair in which Oxhead had so lately been seated, threatening her with death if she attempted to escape. Sir Walter still held Arnoul with the sword pointed to his throat. The villain, perceiving resistance would be useless, exclaimed, "I yield; spare my life, and I will yield."

Anna heard these words, and observing the blood upon Arnoul's clothes, which had issued from the wound he had received, the charity that ever animated her bosom, to do a deed of mercy even to the guilty, now prompted her to

interfere in the behalf of her enemy. She looked at Sir Walter, and said, "He has yielded; let that satisfy you. The wretched man is already wounded by his own knife, and by his own hand, as I interfered to save the Earl. Let us staunch the blood of his wound, that he may not be cut off in the midst of his sin, and so perish eternally."

Arnoul (alike insensible to every feeling of gratitude, and to all sense of fear,) laughed at the humane purpose of Anna's intercession in his behalf, and only answered, "No, no; the wound is but a scratch. It is nothing; leave me alone."

Ursula, who was seated in the chair, to which the Earl had hastily confined her with a cord that he had accidentally found in the apartment, at hearing these words of Arnoul le Clerc, turned her head towards him, and said, with the expression in her countenance of a spirit that delights in malice, "What, Arnoul! a wound, however slight, from the knife of Ursula, is *that* nothing?"

These few words flashed conviction upon

the mind of Arnoul le Clerc. He now recollected that Ursula had given to him her own knife, for the purpose of rendering certain the death of Lewis de Male, even though he should but receive a slight wound with it. "Great God!" exclaimed Arnoul, who, in his alarm, forgot his usual infidelity, and called upon the name of a Being, the violation of whose laws had been the constant occupation of his life, "Great God! then I am poisoned."

It seemed as if the conviction of his danger, acting upon the whole frame, and giving a sudden revulsion to the blood, assisted the effects of the poison, so that a fearful change was instantly produced; for scarcely had Arnoul finished this short sentence, when the veins in his forehead swelled, his face became livid, his hands fell motionless by his side, and, as he sunk upon a bench in the apartment, his eye seemed to wander in restless gaze of mental distraction.

"Aye," said Ursula, "thou art indeed poisoned. The blood that now runs boiling through thy body will soon become cold and

stagnant, even like the spring of waters, congealed by the winter's frost, that once rushed dancing through the veins of the earth."

"Accursed woman," said Arnoul, "I am slain by thy arts. The poison is of thy own work. Give me some of thy drugs, that may even yet render it powerless."

"Woman," said Anna, "you have indeed become the instrument of death to your own associate in crime. If you can now administer aught to restore this miserable man, give it quickly; so shall you free your own soul from the guilt of this act of blood."

Ursula looked upon Anna with a contemptuous smile, as she replied, "He receives a just reward. Had he struck the blow wisely, he would not have been as the fool who falls by his own snare. There is no human power can save thee, Arnoul; for know, that the poison that boils in thy veins was drawn from the body of that reptile whose least infection is death."

"Hag, sorceress, fiend!" exclaimed Arnoul, "call up thy devils, then, to help me. If thou

hast power with the spirits of the damned, bid them come to thy aid to save me."

"No," said Ursula, "I have power to help them to their prey, but none to keep their victims when the hour is come to claim them."

"Fool that I was," cried Arnoul, "to trust thee; and is this the end of all thy arts, thy promises? Yet I will not die unrevenged. If hell awaits me, thou, who hast helped me thither, at least shall bear me company. Woman, accursed woman, thy hour is come as well as mine."

Half frantic with the agonies of bodily pain and mental suffering, Arnoul started from his seat, as if he purposed to wreak upon Ursula a terrible revenge. But as he darted forward, he was again interrupted by Sir Walter d'Anghien. "Miserable man," said Sir Walter, "rather think how short a space remains to you on earth, and employ it in the endeavour to make your peace with Heaven, instead of seeking vengeance as the last act of your life."

"Talk not to me of Heaven," replied Arnoul; "leave it to priests and women to pray and fear —

I will call upon nothing but the fiends to help me. Look at yonder hag; some revenge is left me yet. Lewis, hear me, stab her to the heart now she is in thy power. She it was who proposed to me to murder thee whilst sleeping. She it is, who, to prevent thy mother from joining with the French king, to restore thee to thy power, now seeks the Countess of Artois, perhaps to silence her in the tomb. Stab, stab her to the heart — with her own knife do it. The poison will work sure; it boils in my veins, it consumes my body while I speak. Kill her, then, and may every fiend she has served on earth, may every spirit she has helped to the accursed in hell, may they hover round her in her last moments, to torture her soul and body in death; may they bear her, with every pang that the bad can suffer, to their torments of everlasting misery."

"Peace, blasphemer," said the Earl; "peace. You have indeed told me of things I little thought to hear. Wretched man, think upon thy end. Pray to God — do not curse; think how soon the grave will claim thee."

"Nay, let him curse," said Ursula; "his hour is near, and even now it is come. Hence, Arnoul, go and curse with those spirits who await thee. Even now thou art dying; the poison is finishing its work."

"Lying hag," exclaimed Arnoul; "I will yet live to revenge myself, and to ruin thee." The wretch again started up; it seemed as if he had received an addition of strength even from the energy of his own sufferings, for he freed himself from Sir Walter d'Anghien's hold in a moment, and darted forward towards the chair where Ursula was confined. But ere he reached it, the supernatural degree of strength that had given him such momentary power forsook him; the mortal agony seized upon his limbs, and withered his whole frame; his face became black and convulsed, his throat rattled, he uttered a horrid blasphemy, fell backwards, and expired.

Ursula laughed, and pointing with her finger to the corpse, which lay upon the ground, whilst every one else in the apartment was mute from horror, she exclaimed, "Cast the carrion to

the dogs, and to the ravens; let it not blacken here."

"Silence, woman," said the Earl; "silence — another word, and it is thy last."

"My lord," said Sir Walter d'Anghien, "do not waste your breath in parleying with that guilty sorceress. I cannot stain my sword with the blood of a woman, in whom age, that is honourable in the good, is but an aggravation of her crimes, since her hairs are grown grey in the practice of iniquity. But for this, I would avenge her intent to murder you."

"And thou, Lewis," said Ursula, "what wilt thou do to me? Take my life if thou wilt, for I am in thy power; but know that the spirit of Ursula, even from the tomb, shall hover round thee, and mark thy destiny with ruin."

"Wretched woman," replied the Earl, "again I bid you to be silent. For the present I leave you; when we are gone, I will give orders that you shall be set at liberty. And now hear what I command. Quit this country, and without delay; and if such a soul as inhabits that miserable body can repent, let it be

so. But hereafter, if you are found within the most remote corner of these lands, and I have once more power as their lord, the public executioner shall do justice upon you for all the crimes of your past life."

"When you *have* the power, I will suffer," replied Ursula, scornfully; "you have bound me fast, or I would not now submit."

"Let us go hence, my lord," said Sir Walter d'Anghien; "all is in readiness — the horses are prepared for your departure; I met the honest host, who came to hasten my return, fearing you were in danger. I am thankful to Heaven, that I came in time to be of service."

"Oh, let us instantly depart," said Anna; "I cannot bear to look upon this sight of horror. This has been a dreadful night, but thanks be to God, we are preserved from the snares of the wicked." And, turning to Ursula, she said in a tremulous voice, whilst her countenance, pale with fear, expressed apprehension even to meet the eye of the sorceress, "We leave you Ursula, surrounded by the dead. They were your associates in guilt; let their end fill your

heart with some remorse, and leave this wicked course of life, that will too soon number you in misery with them."

Ursula muttered some reply, but it was lost, for Anna, leaning upon the arm of Sir Walter d'Anghien, hastily quitted the house. The Earl followed. In a few minutes they reached the spot without the ruined walls, where the aged host, unconscious of the dreadful circumstances that had passed, was holding the horses to be in readiness for their departure. The Earl briefly told him all that had occurred, and commanded that the miserable woman he had left bound should be set at liberty, and suffered to depart. He then gave the old man some gold, and the promise of a greater reward, should he ever more be restored to his possessions as Earl of Flanders.

The little party immediately after mounted their horses, bid farewell to the friendly host, and set forward on their road to Lille. In their way from the inn, they passed by the ancient barn where the worthy Sir Simon and his companions were lodged for the night. But,

ignorant of the circumstance, Anna little thought she was so near her beloved guardian; and Lewis de Male was wholly unconscious that to Sir Simon's good-nature (in having served him, though he thought him but a stranger, by sending the host to hasten the return of his companion,) he was in all probability indebted for the preservation of his life.

CHAP. IV.

Having left the Earl of Flanders, Sir Walter d'Anghien, and the fair Anna, safe from the snares by which they were encompassed, and upon their road to Lille, the course of our narrative now obliges us to quit them for awhile, in order to speak of other matters of considerable importance in the affairs of Lewis de Male.

It is already known to the reader that the Duke of Burgundy, (uncle to the youthful monarch Charles the Sixth of France, who had now succeeded to the throne,) was son-in-law to Lewis, having espoused his only legitimate child, a girl but fourteen years old. By this marriage, the Duke hoped to become possessed hereafter of Flanders, in right of his wife, as her lawful inheritance. On account of this expectation, he had busied himself in the intrigues of Margaret Countess of Artois, to prevent any second marriage on the part of the Earl, lest

the birth of a male heir should dispossess him of the succession he hoped to gain by his young wife.

The Countess of Artois, haughty and ambitious, by her interference, had brought about this marriage between the Duke and her granddaughter; and, desirous of maintaining her ascendancy over her less ambitious son, a second marriage on his part had always been feared by Margaret, lest she should lose not only the power, which she exercised even to despotism over Lewis, but likewise her influence with the Duke of Burgundy, who, for his own interest, had suffered her to exercise a greater degree of rule over his actions than he would otherwise have permitted.

Many were the intrigues carried on by the Duke of Burgundy and the Countess of Artois; the crafty Gilbert Matthew acting as go-between, agent, and messenger; and sometimes with a refinement of cunning that deceived even his artful employers, he would suggest to the one or to the other some plan that might appear exclusively to favour the interest of the

party to whom it was proposed, whilst in fact it was really intended to forward a scheme of deep-laid policy for the chief advantage of himself.

The rebellion of the White Hoods, threatening to deprive Lewis de Male of his earldom, and consequently his daughter of her inheritance, had been a cause of serious alarm to Burgundy. In vain had he endeavoured to persuade the late King Charles the Fifth to take part with Flanders against the rebels; but that monarch would never consent to do so, on account of the resentment he felt towards Lewis de Male, for having given shelter to the Duke of Britanny in his court, at a time when that Duke had offended the French King.

But no sooner was Charles the Fifth dead, and his youthful son had succeeded him, under the guardianship of his uncles, Berry and Burgundy, than Margaret of Artois dispatched Gilbert Matthew on a secret mission to the Duke of Burgundy, to intimate to him the extreme danger of the Earl's affairs, and that, could the Duke now induce the young King to

unite with Flanders, the inheritance would be confirmed as his own.

Sir Oliver de Clisson, the favourite of the late King, had been appointed by him constable of France, and as he had much power in the kingdom, and possessed a considerable influence over the mind of the young prince, Burgundy had a cautious part to play; for the constable was to be gained over to the interest of Flanders as well as the King himself. Many letters therefore passed between Burgundy and the Countess, and it was not till the night of the attack on Bruges that Margaret received such certain information of his success, that she resolved to seek the King of France in person, the better to forward her suit.

Conscious of the impatient temper, and the open dealing of Lewis de Male in all political affairs, his mother had purposely kept him in profound ignorance of a negotiation that could only be worked out by cunning, patience, and intrigue, nor did she intend that Lewis should learn her design till all was ripe for action.

Upon the night that the Countess fled from

Bruges with Gilbert Matthew, she went to Lille; but fearful of any delay at such a juncture, she did not remain there even to ascertain the fate of her son; resolving, if he should be dead, to make an attempt to grasp at the earldom of Flanders for the Duke of Burgundy, in right of her grand-daughter. For this purpose, she set forward upon the very next morning, accompanied by Gilbert Matthew, to seek the Duke at Tournay, according to a plan that had been previously arranged between them,-as it was at that place (where we must now conduct the reader), she was to meet the young King; his uncle of Burgundy having induced Charles to journey thither, as if it were but to give him pleasure in viewing the city.

It was after the Countess's arrival at Tournay, that having dispatched Gilbert with a letter to the Duke of Burgundy, she sat in her apartment anxiously awaiting his return. The features of the Countess seldom expressed the passion of her mind; but this day she looked more disturbed than it was usual with her, and she paced her chamber in some impatience, expecting the

return of Gilbert. He at length appeared, and bowing obsequiously as he entered, stood prepared to answer the questions of his mistress with an air of profound attention.

"Gilbert," said the Countess, "what says the Duke of Burgundy to my plan? Shall the King be spoken with to-day?"

"Madam," replied the deacon of the pilots, "the Duke will again propose the matter to his majesty, and entreats that you will meet him in the hall of audience at the usual hour of Charles's coming forth; for it is said that the affair having become known to the White Hoods, in consequence of some papers found upon a French herald, who was taken prisoner in Bruges, a deputation is arrived with a flag of truce from Ghent, to endeavour to make such terms with the King, that he may not enter the country of Flanders with any hostile purpose."

"Indeed!" said the Countess. "That must not be, or I see how it will end: the rebels will offer to place themselves under the dominion of France, and the earldom will be lost to us for ever. I must see the Duke of Burgundy. This

must be prevented by any means. But have you heard any intelligence of my son? Now he is most wanted, he is not to be found. He escaped, you said, from Bruges?"

"It is so rumoured," answered Gilbert Matthew; "and some poor cottager has spread a strange report, that he saw the Earl in a mean disguise, attended by some young knight, and a damsel, he declares to be the daughter of John Lyon. He farther says, that they were in much distress, and that he sold them a horse to help them forward on their journey."

"The daughter of John Lyon with the Earl in his flight!" exclaimed the Countess. "It is impossible; she was not in Bruges."

"Not as you might know, madam," said Gilbert. "But as Sir Walter d'Anghien is the assured friend of your son, he might assist him to secrete a favourite damsel, who, it is universally believed, in spite of her low birth, and her being the daughter of a rebel, Lewis will one day espouse."

"He shall perish first," said the Countess. "I will never see my blood debased by such an

alliance; and it is the interest of Burgundy that no second union should give birth to what may ruin his hopes of the succession. And now, Gilbert Matthew, where is Ursula?" continued the Countess, in a lower tone of voice. "Is she in safe ward?"

"She is in my own apartment, as you directed," replied Gilbert; "she has followed you from Bruges, but will not remain here beyond this day. Yet, madam, I would have you cautious how you trust to one who is an assured and able instrument in the hands of the White Hoods, and especially of Peter du Bois."

"Do not counsel me," said the Countess, in her usual haughty manner. "I tell you that Ursula, under the semblance of being an agent for the White Hoods, has a thousand times betrayed their schemes to me. You forget it was Ursula who sold the poison that dispatched that arch-traitor, John Lyon."

"She had a personal enmity against the man," replied Gilbert. "Yet, believe me, she is no friend to the Earl of Flanders; and I think,

from the cautious manner in which she came hither, and her eager desire to leave this place after her expected interview with you, she has something more to fear than we may imagine from our own party. I much doubt but that she has been engaged in some dark proceedings, of which she would keep you ignorant."

"I must see her," said the Countess, "I must see her; send her to me. One interview more, and she shall depart; then I will to the council. Do you await me, Gilbert, without, near the chamber of audience."

Gilbert bowed, and retired. The Countess, after he was gone, walked towards a table, and took from a small box that stood upon it a paper. This she held in her hand, and for some time considered the contents. She then made notes, as if adding something of importance that occurred to her mind. The door opened, and Ursula stood before her.

The pretended sorceress bore in her hand the mystic wand which she used when employed upon those absurd spells, whose diabolical in-

fluence was universally credited, even by the most enlightened of the times in which she lived, so general was a belief in magic.

"Make fast the door," said the Countess, "lest Gilbert Matthew should lurk without. I trust no one farther than necessity requires; and he has nothing to do with my conference with thee."

Ursula obeyed.

"Come nearer, woman," continued the Countess, with an aspect in which awe and solemnity were depicted in strong characters; for, though insensible to every feeling of virtue and religion, Margaret of Artois was a devout believer in the superstitions of the age. "Ursula, have you learnt the event of these proceedings? And shall the blood of Artois yet flow through the veins of the future Earls of Flanders? What will be our success?"

"It will depend," replied the sorceress, answering in her mysterious mode of speech, and with the look of one who appeared to observe in the very air what was invisible to other eyes than her own, "it will depend upon this night.

Before the glass runs down the twelfth hour, the doom of Artois and of Flanders will be sealed in the book of fate."

"What mean you, woman?" said the Countess; "I cannot read your riddle."

"I dare not speak it plainly," replied Ursula. "There are powers who act for us, but will not be named; there are deeds that must be done, but never told; there are charms that operate, but we must not think wherefore they do so. Mark what I shall direct, and the end you look for shall be yours."

"That end is power," said the Countess; "so I would interpret your dark speech. But how is it to be attained? What are the means?"

"I have consulted," answered Ursula, "fearful spirits, who reveal their purposes by those bright stars that look like gems in the mantle of the dark and melancholy night, and *they* promise you success, should France unite with Flanders. But, to gain this, you must observe what I shall now direct."

"Direct!" said the Countess, who, even whilst under the tutelage of the sorceress she

employed, could scarcely suppress her haughty spirit. "What is it that you dare utter in the tone of command to Margaret of Artois?"

"When you shall this day," continued Ursula, "confer with the Duke of Burgundy on the means of entering Flanders, make him promise that he will lead his people into Flanders by the bridge of Commines."

"The bridge of Commines!" repeated the Countess, with astonishment. "What means this fantastic direction? And why should the French enter Flanders to restore the lawful Earl to his rights in that particular place? Why must they pass the river that divides the countries more by this bridge than by any other?"

"It will lead to success," replied Ursula. "Mark my words, proud lady. Either this promise must be given to you by the Duke of Burgundy ere the glass runs the twelfth hour to-night, or your enterprize will fail, and the coronet of Flanders pass to an alien."

"Your words are wild," said the Countess, "and you give me this counsel without a shadow of reason. How can I rely upon you? What

proof can you give, either that there is sincerity in your words, or prudence in your directions?"

"I can vouch the past to make you trust me for the future," replied Ursula. "Who told Gilbert Matthew that the deputation was to arrive here to-day from Ghent; was it not Ursula? Who made known to him (and for your benefit) that the dotard citizens would worship France, displace their Earl, and bow the knee to a foreign prince, so they might keep their gold in safety; was it not Ursula? And who, lady, to obey your commands, to follow in the paths of your own crafty policy, induced the White Hoods to commence their hostilities in France itself; was it not Ursula?"

"Hast thou done this?" exclaimed the Countess — "then I will trust thee. I will obey the lightest word that thou shalt command. If *this* be done, all hope of terms between France and the White Hoods must be for ever at an end."

"It *is* done," said Ursula, "and by my instigation; a party of Peter du Bois's men have burnt a village on the frontier of France. It

was your own plan, Margaret of Artois, to set the French king at bitter enmity against our people. Now do you believe that I serve your cause?"

"I do, I do," said the Countess, exultingly. "Here, Ursula, here is gold. I must to the council. The Duke of Burgundy shall give his consent; he shall give me the promise you require, or the lances under my obedience in Artois shall never join him. I will remember the bridge of Commines!"

"Aye, the bridge of Commines," replied Ursula, whilst a gleam of malignant joy stole over her dark features. "There death shall hold the watch, and I will tell the hour."

The Countess bowed her head in token of assent, and went towards the chamber of audience.

CHAP. V.

The ancient city of Tournay, whose remains, at the present period, afford such an interesting field for the artist and the antiquary, at the time of our narrative was at the height of its glory. Tournay commanded a vast champaigne, and was surrounded by walls and towers of ponderous construction; one of these, (even to this day,) though on a smaller scale, reminds us of the castle of St. Angelo at Rome, and seems to look down upon the buildings of more recent date, like our Gothic ancestors on their less hardy sons, with a character of strength and grandeur unequalled by the present times.

The cathedral of Notre Dame St. Eleutaire, of the early Norman architecture, presented the finest combinations in its internal parts, simple but massive, vast yet elegant. The round-headed arch and the curiously carved columns united,

with the many shrines and altars of the cathedral, to form an object at once rich and imposing; whilst the venerable castle and the magnificent abbey of St. Martin, (of which at the present time scarcely a vestige remains,) were deemed equal in strength and beauty to any buildings of the period.

The youthful king, Charles the Sixth of France, was now lodged in the castle of Tournay, whither he had journeyed, at the instigation of his uncle the Duke of Burgundy, and where, for the present, he held his court. The hall of audience, in which the King usually received strangers, or sometimes held his council, was of a peculiarly interesting character, being (like the cathedral) of early Norman architecture. Two rows of short and massive columns, finished by the round-headed arch, supported the roof of carved oak; whilst a corresponding gallery ran round the sides of the apartment, at the foot of lofty windows, which were filled with the rich and deep hues of the finest painted glass, representing the arms of the city, the kings of France,

and various nobles and knights, whose names were all more or less connected with Tournay.

Towards the upper end of the hall appeared a raised seat, ascended by several steps, covered with cloth of crimson and gold. The high back of this seat was finished by a carved oaken canopy, covered also with cloth embroidered with the arms of France, surmounted by a crown, in token of the rank of him whose right it was to sit beneath, as king of France.

Here the lords of the council and the court were now assembled, expecting the entrance of their youthful prince. No one presumed to take a seat, but all waited bare-headed, with their eyes often cast towards the door that opened from the apartment of the King. Nor can we here look back to this scene of former times, without attempting to give to the reader some slight sketch of a few of the principal personages who were in attendance; men whose names have often been the delight of the ancient chronicler, as he noted down their deeds of hardihood and valour; whose memories have formed a pleasing

subject for the imagination of the poet or the painter; and whose slightest remains (be it of their habitations, their monuments, or of the towns they have built or conquered,) now form a delightful subject of investigation for the curious and the antiquary.

On the right of the throne stood the King's uncles, the Dukes of Berry and Burgundy, arrayed in robes of state, heavy with the purflings of their embroidery. On the left stood the lord high constable of France, Sir Oliver de Clisson, who succeeded the famous Bertrand du Guesclin in that office. Sir Oliver was of the middle size, strong and muscular in form, his countenance had been handsome in youth, and was now more changed by the service he had seen in battles, by frequent exposure to toil and hardship, than by age, since he was scarce fifty years old. The forehead was high and flexible, which a habit of frowning had contracted into an appearance of deep wrinkles. The frown of Sir Oliver proceeded neither from intense thinking nor ill-humour; he had been deprived of the sight of his right eye, by the blow of a battle-

axe in the field of Auray, and ever since that period he was observed to frown, as if to assist the sight of the remaining eye, by protruding the brow, so as to afford it a greater degree of shade from the light. This accident had considerably impaired the natural grace and harmony of his features, but the eye he still possessed was large, full, and brilliant, and seemed, by its quick glance and watchful observance, to be quite equal in its faculties to the double organ of sight possessed by ordinary men. The mouth was of a rigid character; and altogether the features of Sir Oliver de Clisson presented what might be justly termed "a confirmed countenance," united with military frankness.

The character of De Clisson may be best delineated from his actions. As a soldier, he was brave in the field, and prudent in council, not anxious to shed blood on a light occasion, but never spared it when he had once unsheathed the sword; a circumstance that caused some historians to bestow on him the appellation of *the butcher*. As a courtier, (rare though it be either in the past or the present age,) he was

frank and sincere. Attached to his prince personally, yet, for the sake of that attachment, he never compromised the public interest. As a man, he was honest, stern, and blunt in his general manners; yet capable of acts of generosity. Quickly susceptible in feeling, he seldom suffered an injury to pass unrevenged, nor a benefit unrequited. Such was Oliver de Clisson, respected by his friends, feared by his enemies, and the idol of the men-at-arms, who had followed him through many a daring contest and sanguine victory. *

Sir Oliver seldom appeared unarmed; his bacinet, his haubergeon, and gauntlets, were to him an ordinary attire; and though he now stood bare-headed, expecting the arrival of the

* Sir Oliver de Clisson was buried at Josselin, in Britanny. The beautiful marble effigy and monument erected to his memory, (the former being considered an excellent likeness of him,) were torn to pieces during the French revolution. The author, in company with her late husband Mr. C. Stothard, during her travels in Britanny, had the good fortune to discover and to rescue from total destruction the head of Sir Oliver's effigy. It was found in the garden of a tobacconist, where it had been stuck up as a scarecrow. See "Tour in Normandy and Britanny."

King, and on this occasion had substituted for the steel bacinet a hood of velvet, yet he did not seem to be at home in the exchange he had made in this part of his dress; since, instead of suffering the hood to fall over his back, (depending from the long band or tippet, as it was usual with others to do,) he now held it in his hand, and twisted it about in an awkward manner. Sir John de Vienne, the brave admiral of France, conversed apart with Sir Oliver; but (whilst other courtiers spoke in a half whisper, as if the very walls of the royal hall of audience should not be offended by too bold a speech,) Sir John and Sir Oliver spoke in the ordinary key of voices that were rather remarkable for their depth than for soft accentuation.

The handsome young Count de Montmorenci was also stationed near the throne; and though one of the bravest and most gallant knights of his time, he was in nothing deficient in those more polite accomplishments, that had been sung by the troubadours as excellencies framed to attract ladies eyes, and steal away their hearts. Montmorenci could handle the tilting lance

with grace as well as strength, he could carol a ditty, or dance in hall, and wore his shoes long toed to the extreme verge of fashion; whilst, not content with having the arms of his house worked in embroidery upon the breast and back part of his mantle, he had them also gaily emblazoned on a ground of blue and silver, down the front of his coat or jerkin.

The Count stood alone; he noticed no one present, for none of the fairer sex were in the hall, and amused himself, in the absence of the ladies, with one of their favourite toys, a young squirrel, fastened by a silver chain, that sat and frolicked upon his arm.

The young Count de St. Py was also present, and leaned with folded arms, and outstretched legs, against the back of one of the oak chairs, whilst he seemed to be engaged in counting the number of the arches that formed the carved ceiling, for his eyes were fixed upwards, although his looks betrayed rather the listless idleness of not thinking at all, than of thinking deeply.

At length that door, so ominous and eventful to the eyes of courtiers, opened; and immedi-

ately, several of the chamberlains and knights in attendance upon the King sallied forth. Then came the squire of the body, followed by an usher bearing a silver staff surmounted by a fleur-de-lis. These marshalled the way; whilst the nobles in the hall ceased to converse with each other, drew themselves up into an erect position, and fell some paces back, to make room for the passage of the King to the throne.

Charles the Sixth, the object of this general respect and silent attention, now entered the hall with that easy step and unembarrassed air that proclaimed he had been used to these ceremonies from childhood, and that they had neither the power nor the novelty to draw his attention from the amusements of boyhood. Charles was but sixteen years old, and the beautiful young falcon he now bore upon his wrist seemed, for the moment, to engage and interest him more than his court.

The King was of a fair complexion, tall, and well formed, light and active in his motions, and with a play of cheerfulness and good humour

about his face that is always capable of rendering youth peculiarly pleasing, and, in a prince, was deemed the height of fascination, and whatever could most charm or attract mankind. His face was fair, but too delicate to indicate strength of constitution; and even at this early period there was a wild expression about the eye, which was remembered, and remarked many years after, by the learned leeches, as indicative of the unhappy malady that so often afflicted his mind at a maturer age.

Yet these *post-prophetic* observations of the leeches can hardly be deemed of sufficient force to prove that the King's malady was constitutional; since it should rather seem, from the accounts given by the writers of the period, that his first attack was produced by over-exertion, and the excessive heat of the sun affecting the brain, at a time when the King laboured under some slight indisposition. Be this as it may, at the period of our narrative his mental health was unimpaired; he was neither deficient in personal courage nor in intellect. On the contrary, Charles possessed the accomplishments

that were usually given to the youth of his day who were of noble birth; and his romantic attachment and marriage with his beloved Queen, some years after, evinced a spirit of refined manners, that shewed he was capable both of sincere affection and gallantry towards the favoured damsel of his choice.

The young King was attired in regal splendour. He wore the crimson mantle of state, lined and trimmed with ermine. His dalmatic fell in large and graceful folds over a tunic of white linen. It was formed of light blue silk, embroidered with the fleur-de-lis in silver, and fastened in front with a fermail or brooch of diamonds. The throat was bare. The beautiful light brown hair, for which Charles was so remarkable, hung in profusion down his back, and curled so thickly round his forehead as almost to conceal the fillet of fine pearls that was bound about his brows and confined the longer tresses to the back of the head.

Charles advanced towards the throne, graciously saluted his attendants, and, with a quickness of perception that marked his manners even

at this early age, had the good sense to address each in a way appropriate to his several character or profession. Having spoken a few words almost to every one present, he turned to the young Count de Montmorenci, whose age and habits had rendered him a favourite companion to the youthful monarch. "See, my lord," said Charles, "we have this morning received a fair present from a fair dame. The noble Countess of Artois has sent us her young falcon, who will chace a heron with any bird in our dominions, and will come again to the lure without wandering. We this morning will try our falcon against yours, my lord; so our good uncles of Berry and of Burgundy will but grant us a short council, and put aside their grave matters; for in sooth we are tired of these long debates, and long for a horse, a heron, and a fair field."

"My gracious nephew and prince," said the Duke of Burgundy, advancing, "I should be loth to hinder you of the sports that become your age, and are suited to your health; but there are matters of such moment to lay before

your grace, as demand your instant attention; they may not brook delay."

"So you told us yesterday," said the young King, "and so you say every day; but if we are never to have leisure to follow any fair sports, we had rather be the son of one of our own squires, than wear these robes of state as shackles of our liberty; for the sons of our people sport when they please, whilst we sit, and hear you, my lords, read us counsels, sometimes more to contradict each other in your several opinions than to await our decision; prithee, then, debate, whilst Charles and Montmorenci fly their falcons, and the wheel of state shall not stand still for lack of hands to turn it."

"The sons of common men, my sovereign," said Sir Oliver de Clisson, "are free to do as they list, because they have nothing to do of import; but a king's son and himself a king must learn to be a man, though he be but a boy, for folly is as unseemly in high place as frolic in old age. You, my lord, must therefore begin betimes to learn by the counsels of those

who are elder and wiser than yourself, or the idleness of a prince will bring his state into contempt."

"You counsel us bluntly, my lord constable," replied Charles, with the utmost good humour; "but we will not take offence, nor play truant. Speak, therefore, the subject of these matters of important debate, and we will do our best to understand them, and to receive your counsels. And Montmorenci," continued the King, turning to his youthful companion, as he added in a half whisper, "do you steal out and bid the falconer have all things in readiness; for please our lady of St. Eleutaire, when we have escaped from our uncles, we will instantly to horse and away. My Lord de St. Py will join us."

The Lord de St. Py, who had removed his eyes from the ceiling to something like a sensible observance of passing objects at the entrance of the young King, bowed respectfully his acceptance of the invitation; and Montmorenci hastened to have all things in readiness to fly

the hawks, as soon as the council should break up.

"Your grace," said the Duke of Burgundy, "will this morning have a fair suitor, Margaret Countess of Artois, who now waits without to solicit, as I before told your highness, your assistance against the enemies of her house."

"Admit the noble dame," replied Charles. "In sooth, we should be no true knight in heart did we refuse to hear a lady's prayer; and do you, my Lord de St. Py, marshal her to us, since you are more accustomed to be the squire of dames than our uncles or the valiant Sir Oliver."

The Lord de St. Py again bowed gracefully, and walking upon the very tip of his toes, in imitation of his friend Montmorenci, (which, from being imitative, in him was ridiculous,) left the chamber, and returned conducting Margaret of Artois, followed by her attendant the deacon, Gilbert Matthew, who on this occasion acted as the train-bearer of his mistress. The

Countess whose manners were naturally dignified, and her person graceful and noble in every movement, advanced direct towards the throne, and bending her knee upon the first step, made her obeisance to the King.

Charles instantly raised her, and said with a smile, "In sooth, dear lady, our knee is rather due to you than yours to us, since, if beauty, wisdom, and courage claim the homage of our sex, when they are seen in the fairer part of creation, the Countess of Artois may challenge princes to her service."

"Your grace speaks like the lord of Montmorenci himself," said the blunt Sir Oliver; "but the lady, I fancy, will be better satisfied with the assistance of your highness's men-at-arms, than with the smooth words of your courtiers."

"Nay, Sir Oliver," replied the King, "you shall not chide our courtesy, nor will we be wanting to use courage, though we take example of the first from our friend Montmorenci, and of the last from our constable. But we must first hear this lady's suit."

The Countess of Artois then stated, in a brief and forcible manner, the wrongs herself and the Earl of Flanders had sustained by the rebellion of the White Hoods; and in order to shew the necessity which existed for the French king's espousing her cause, she dwelt with much art upon the outrage committed by the Flemish rebels in burning a small village in the dominions of France. The Duke of Burgundy saw the favourable moment, not only to act upon the mind of the young King, but also to propitiate Sir Oliver de Clisson, who had hitherto entered but coldly into the cause. He knew De Clisson would fire at the smallest injury offered to the French people, and he was not mistaken.

"By the soul of my father," exclaimed Sir Oliver, "this is not to be borne. Shall these rascally mechanical fellows of Ghent, who live upon the plunder of their own country, insult ours? shall they dare do it? no, there is not a man here but will unite with one accord to chastise them. Let but our sovereign speak the word, and Oliver de Clisson again draws

his sword to chastise the enemies of Charles the Sixth, as he has often done those of his royal father. Speak, my prince, and we obey you."

While Sir Oliver pronounced these words, he suddenly turned towards the King, because the eye in which there was no sight had hitherto been next him. It seemed as if he had turned to enforce, by a fixed and determined glance, the command he had requested the King to give him, in a voice and manner of authority rather than as a solicitation.

"We will not be wanting, my lord constable," said the young King, with much spirit, "to take up arms, and proclaim war against these insolent Flemings, as well in revenge of our own injured people, as to right this noble lady and her son, our cousin of Flanders. We are already knighted, and long to buckle on our spurs in real contest; for, sooth to say, we have never hitherto had armour on, and have only tilted at a quintain, like a boy and a page, instead of a prince and a man. But these things shall be amended; we will lose no time. My lord constable, do you take upon you to issue our pro-

clamation, that all knights and squires in our dominions may hasten to our banner, and we will instantly march against these White Hoods;" and, turning to Montmorenci (who was now returned, and stood near his master in the hall), he said, "we will have as brave a suit of armour as ever prince wore, and it shall be made by the same artisan who executed yours, my lord, for the last tournay in Paris; and our device on this occasion shall be a *flying hart*."

"A flying hart! your majesty," said Sir Oliver; "no flight, I trust, where France leads the van. And why desert the royal bearings of your house for a new fancy like this?"

"I will tell you, constable," replied the King, with the utmost simplicity of manner, and gravity of aspect, "if we take a *flying hart* for our device in this war, it is from no light fancy, but in obedience to a *dream* that last night haunted our sleep, and weighs upon our memory now we are awake. Attend, my lords, and we will tell you our dream."

All the courtiers now made a movement to

get nearer to the King, and, with an air of earnest attention and eager curiosity, prepared to hear him repeat his dream, as if it were the delivery of an oracle that was to decide the fate of France. Charles was not without the superstition of the age in which he lived, when the agency of dreams, as well as the power of sorcery, formed a part of the creed of every true believer.

Sir Oliver de Clisson alone looked with an air of doubt that almost amounted to contempt, as he muttered, "A dream! Leave dreams, my prince, for women to fancy, and priests to expound. The King of France should dream only of his good lances, and awake to set them in action."

Charles, long accustomed to the caustic humour of his constable (whose bravery and fidelity in many extremities, during the late reign, had given him a sort of licence to speak bluntly), now took no notice of this remark, and prepared to tell his dream, with an air of pride and confidence that shewed he thought that he had something to relate not unworthy of being heard. Sir

Oliver perhaps felt pride in the very rudeness that induced him to hold in contempt the communication the young King was about to make; for so fond are some men of distinction, that it is much to be doubted if those who are noted for *blunt* manners do not sometimes feel their vanity gratified by such a rough distinction, as well as the more polite in being remarked for the graces of good breeding.

The King, seeing all assembled were attentive, thus commenced the account of his dream: "Methought, my lords, that I was in this city, and that the Earl of Flanders gave to me a pilgrim falcon (even such a bird as the lady of Artois sent to me this day), and the falcon was docile and well trained, and came and went at my command, and spread her wings as she sported on my wrist. One fine morning, when the sun was just risen, and lightly touched the tops of the woods with beams of bright gold, and the birds were singing, and the air smelt sweet, my lord constable and I went forth into the fields to fly my falcon. We mounted our horses, and, seeing a heron near us, I said,

'Cast off the falcon, Sir Oliver, that she may chace the heron.' De Clisson did so; when, lo! my falcon mounted so high into the air that we nearly lost sight of her. Our horses went swiftly, scarcely touching the ground; still the falcon kept a-head, till, coming to a thick wood, we could not pass it but on foot. So we dismounted — when no falcon could be seen. While I was vexed, and musing what to do, a *hart*, white as the snow when drifted by a winter's wind, sleek and comely, issued from the forest, spreading two large wings, and, bounding towards us, crouched before my feet. I mounted upon the noble animal, that instantly spread abroad her wings and carried me above the tops of the woods, that seemed to wave like the sea, as I looked down upon them. The hart took a direction towards Flanders, and, in a moment, I beheld my falcon striking down heron after heron, whilst they fought furiously against her, but in vain. When she had completely destroyed the herons, I called her back again. She, well trained to the lure, directly returned, and perched upon my wrist; and the hart, that

seemed to understand all that had passed, turned back again, and brought me to the same spot where my lord constable was waiting for me. On this I awoke, but my dream has dwelt upon my memory, and I hold it to be a presage of success to the expedition we are about to make. The white hart that enabled me to follow up my bird shall be the device we will take for our first essay in arms."

The courtiers, with one voice, expressed their admiration of the young King's dream, and commended the wisdom he evinced in expounding it as a presage of good; and, in order to flatter the King's fancy, they each declared they would bear about them in this war the emblem of the white and winged hart.

The Duke of Burgundy, and the Countess of Artois, the persons the most interested in the success of the expedition, lost no time in confirming the good-will expressed towards their cause, and immediately entered into consultation relative to the measures to be adopted, in order to collect their men-at-arms, and to commence the march into the Flemish territory. De

Clisson heartily concurred in these plans. It was, therefore, finally arranged that the Countess of Artois should set forward, without delay, to collect her people in Artois; and she proposed that they should enter Flemish ground by the *bridge of Commines*, on the river Lis; where, also, she could unite her forces with those of the King and the Duke of Burgundy.

Some objections to this last proposal were started by certain members of the council, but the Duke of Burgundy, fearing to contradict the Countess, joined with her entreaty; and it was finally settled, that the allied armies should pass into Flanders by the bridge of Commines. The Countess, impatient of the least delay, resolved to depart on the present hour for Artois, to collect her men-at-arms, and was about taking her leave of the young King, when a new subject of interruption occurred, that must be told in the next chapter.

CHAP. VI.

There was a bustling movement towards the extremity of the hall of audience, and a mingled sound of voices that seemed to indicate contention, a thing very unusual so near the presence of majesty. Charles heard the noise, and observed a stir amongst his attendants at the end of the hall. "Prithee, my Lord de Montmorenci," said he, "go and learn what it is that thus disturbs our people; something extraordinary, it must be; return quickly, and tell us."

The young courtier obeyed, and soon came back again with a smile upon his lips. "My gracious sovereign," said Montmorenci, "yonder is a man of most mechanical aspect, who wears a gown and cap, such as would suit a court fool at a mumming; yet he is very consequential in his manners. He is attended by four or five grey beards, who bear with them a white cloth, much in the form of a table napkin;

it may in all probability be of their own spinning; and *this* they call a flag of truce. The above described mechanical old leader represents himself to be the chief of a deputation from the men of Ghent to your majesty."

"And why do our attendants refuse to admit a deputation?" enquired the King.

"Because," replied Montmorenci, "it has been proclaimed, for some days past, by your majesty's council, that no deputation from the Flemish rebels should be admitted, unless they had previously obtained letters of permission from your majesty to pass hither; failing in this, all such persons as compose the deputation are liable to be considered as lawful prisoners. But these men still insist on coming into your royal presence."

"Admit them," said Charles, "and we will then judge how far they are liable to the penalty. We had forgot the proclamation, issued on the advice of our uncle of Burgundy."

The Countess of Artois and the Duke of Burgundy, who were desirous that no deputation from the White Hoods should be received by

the King, for obvious reasons connected with their personal interest, now exchanged an expressive glance with each other.

"Gracious prince," said the Countess, addressing the King, "I would counsel your majesty, for your own safety, to beware how you admit these men. Had they designed fairly, they would have obtained your warrant for the deputation. You know not half the deceits practised by the men of Ghent; they are capable of the worst treachery."

"We will not lightly trust them," replied the King; "but yet we will hear them. Surrounded by our brave knights, and in this hall, we have nothing to fear. Bring forward these men of Ghent, Montmorenci."

The Count obeyed, and returned conducting four or five elderly men, headed by no less a person than the worthy Sir Simon de Bête, who, attired in robes of office, and wearing an enormous gold chain as master of the goldsmiths' company, walked forward with an air of consequence, that was not diminished even by his being in the presence of majesty itself.

The little round figure of Sir Simon, his singular dress, air of pride, and the comic expression of his countenance, in which good-humour and self-importance were both blended, so forcibly struck the young King, that he could not suppress a smile, as he returned the profound and respectful bows and salutations of the goldsmith. The Countess of Artois stept some paces back, and whispered to Gilbert Matthew.

All ceremonies being past, Sir Simon bowed, hemmed, and thus opened the purpose of his mission: "May it please your grace's king's majesty, to hear, in my person, the sentiments, opinions, and good dispositions of the worthy and sober part of the citizens of Ghent towards your majesty. The citizens aforenamed, having attended to certain suggestions of mine, designed for the public good, thought fit to depute me as the head of a deputation to your grace's majesty — I being Sir Simon de Bête, knight, master of the goldsmiths' company, and burgomaster of the said city, and in all things your majesty's humble servant, in an honest way, and

consistent with the duties of my own public station."

This singular address, full of what was intended as highly respectful to the King, and yet of sufficient personal consequence to keep up the dignity of his native city, on the part of Sir Simon, caused the courtiers to titter, and even Charles to smile. Every one seemed amused at the opening speech of the deputation, except Burgundy and the Countess; *they* feared that the very simplicity and plain dealing of Sir Simon might throw an obstacle in the way of their plots and schemes to carry on their measures.

"Most worthy burgomaster," said the King, addressing Sir Simon, "we nothing doubt your own good intentions, and will hear you; although we fear the mission must be fruitless, since we have ourself been injured by your people. The men of Ghent have already commenced hostilities in the kingdom of France; they have pillaged and burnt a village on the frontier."

At hearing these words, the countenance of

Sir Simon changed from its self-satisfied expression (that spoke the certain expectation of success) to that of a most woeful and blank aspect.

"May it please your grace," said Sir Simon, "I, and these my fellow-citizens, knew nothing of the matter of this affair of burning the village on the frontier."

"And were you also ignorant," enquired the Duke of Burgundy, "that, by daring to approach this presence without letters of permission, you now stand in the place of a lawful prisoner?"

Sir Simon turned towards the Duke, perfectly astounded at this intimation. "A prisoner!" said he, "a prisoner! and I bear the flag of truce, in my person, from the good town of Ghent! Why the greatest franchise that was ever taken from us, was nothing compared to such an injury as this! Please your gracious majesty to hear me speak; for, saving that your grace is a king, (and as a king ought to hear a man before you judge him,) you have a young bosom, and youth has generally a kindlier feeling than older hearts."

"It is certain you are in danger of becoming a lawful prisoner under our proclamation," replied Charles; "yet we will hear you, although we fear that we cannot grant your terms."

"My lord king," said Sir Simon, "the worth of gold is never known till it is tried, and so is it with men. Had your majesty no occasions for shewing mercy, the world could not say, the young King (and with the blessing of our lady may you so continue to your life's end) is a merciful king. Now, as I came hither to do good, and without thought of evil, so I hope to be allowed to return in safety, whether my mission succeed or not. For I came but to say, that the elder and more sober citizens of Ghent, being more minded to peace than to war, and hearing it was urged that your majesty should take part against them, they would fain offer to submit themselves to your will in all things, and to lay down their arms, on the condition that your majesty would promise to restore to them their franchises, for they dare no longer trust to the Earl, the Lord Lewis de Male."

At the hearing of these words another expressive glance was exchanged between Burgundy and the Countess of Artois. "And what security can you offer, citizen," said the Duke, in an ironical tone, "for the fulfilment of these proffered terms of submission, when, at the very time you make them, your own people are burning and pillaging our towns, before we have taken one active step against them?"

"They were some of the rabble who did so," answered Sir Simon, "and without the knowledge of the sober citizens, or of us, the rulers of Ghent."

"The sober part of your citizens are few in number," replied the Duke; "and your rule is but in name, if such acts are done with impunity."

Sir Simon hung down his head at the hearing of these words, whilst De Clisson spoke apart to the King, and in so low a tone of voice that what he said could be heard by no one else in the apartment. Charles appeared to listen with much attention, and, turning towards Sir Simon, said, "Our valiant constable has advised us; and though, since our proclamation,

we are not bound to receive your unauthorised mission, still he would that we should entertain it, on condition that you bear back to the citizens of Ghent a proposal of such terms as we may accept in honour to ourself, and in justice to our allies."

"I will most gladly bear your grace's proposition," said Sir Simon, "because it must be an honourable one, since it comes from the lips of a King."

"Hear, then, the terms on which our wise counsellor and valiant constable advises us to accept the submission of Ghent, and to forbear to carry on the war," continued Charles. "First, that the heads of your leaders, Philip Von Artaveld and Peter du Bois, be forfeited to the executioner, as an act of public justice; and secondly, that it shall be at our pleasure to restore such franchises as we may think fit to grant, and no other."

Sir Simon started at hearing the proposal of these terms. His head, which had hitherto hung down, became suddenly erect, his cheeks flushed, and the whole person of the little gold-

smith seemed to swell with feelings of indignation. "What! my lord King," said Sir Simon, who felt a more than ordinary share of courage from the wrath that was boiling within him, "to whom does your grace think your majesty is making such terms of proposal? I am no king, nor constable either; but one who has long expounded the laws and done justice as chief burgomaster in the good town of Ghent, and I never yet found a law, divine or human, that could sanction treachery, though the proposal of it came from the lips of a prince."

"You are an insolent and a bold man," said the Duke of Burgundy; "you shall suffer for this."

"I am an honest man," replied Sir Simon, and he turned to confront the Duke, "and I dare suffer for it."

"I will hear no more," said Burgundy; "you have insulted our sovereign, my royal nephew, and I will enforce the penalty. You are a prisoner, — take his sword."

"I am no prisoner," answered Sir Simon; "and while the King of France stands there in

person in his own court, no man, but by his order, shall dare to touch me. But I have nothing to say to you Duke of Burgundy, I will talk to yonder young gentleman, who, though he be a king, shall and will hear reason from an older head than his own; and that too from one who has long been used to act and to do what is right, as ——"

Sir Simon was here interrupted by Charles himself, who, naturally good-humoured, and, like youths of his age, fond of sport, felt more amused than angered by the mixture of indignation and self-importance that caused the chief magistrate of Ghent to swell and chafe in his presence. The Lord de Montmorenci whispered to the King, "That the little old mechanical goldsmith would make excellent sport; and for the love of all the Saints, begged his majesty to detain him at court, if it were but to kill the Lord de St. Py, who would never endure the vulgarity of his presence."

"Sir Simon," said Charles, as he mildly addressed him, "tell us, I beseech you, and speak your mind freely, what was there in our pro-

posal that could excite so much displeasure on your part?"

"My noble young King," replied Sir Simon, "since you bid me speak plainly, I will tell you, that when I came here as head of a deputation from Ghent, it was in order to prevent bloodshed — to make peace; but not by the means of treachery and dishonour. How, then, could I consent to what was proposed to me? Of the value of Peter du Bois's head, I say nothing; since it may be worth just as much as that of the evil one in his own person, when he first brought mischief into this world. Still I am not the man to betray a fellow-citizen in cool blood. But for Von Artaveld, whatever *he* has done, be it right or wrong, (I do not intend to speak of the merits of the case,) he is a rare youth, brave, disinterested, and honourable — aye, and though I say it in this presence, he is one who, for good and noble qualities, may rank with kings themselves. Rather than suffer one word to pass these lips that should betray but the dog that follows Von Artaveld's heels, I would give the Duke of Burgundy leave to

hang me up, as well as to make me a prisoner, before your majesty's own eyes."

"Von Artaveld is a friend, then, of yours, Sir Simon," said Charles, "that you speak thus warmly in his favour."

"He is the friend of every honest man," replied Sir Simon. "I wish your majesty may have about you one so sincere; for kings, they say, are too high to have equals; and I do not well see, how a man can call another a true friend, when fear and pride may step in between them. And then, for our franchises, the best part of us fought for them, and them only; though I grant there were many in Ghent who fought from a worse cause. But the better citizens, who value liberty, will never consent to let foreigners dock these franchises at pleasure, even though they should die for it. Restore all our franchises or none."

"You are a bold citizen," observed the King, "who can say thus much to us when you stand within our power."

"I say only what I think and feel," replied Sir Simon. "I love my native city, and I will

never betray Ghent, either within or without its walls. And though I grant your majesty Ghent has done wrong; yet a city to its head magistrate, is like a child to a parent; and what father, that has the yearnings of natural affection within his bosom, would cast off a son though he commits a fault."

"You were wiser, friend," observed Sir Oliver de Clisson, "to keep these counsels to yourself; if you refuse to carry back the terms, you might at least remain silent, and not comment upon them."

"And why should I do so," said Sir Simon. "I mean honestly; and therefore I speak openly. I have not yet been sufficiently long in a court to learn the trick of it."

Montmorenci, who exceedingly enjoyed the scene that was passing, as an excellent subject for jesting, and had continued to provoke Sir Simon, by attending to his speeches with an air and a smile of ineffable contempt, now, in order still farther to enrage the hunted goldsmith, said, "In good sooth, most worthy expounder of laws, and compounder of metals, it were

pity you left the court at all; since, if you remain, we should have the benefit of wisdom that would instruct us all, quite as much as his majesty's licensed fool."

"If wisdom can be taught by fools," replied Sir Simon, sharply, as he looked at the young Count, "there will be no lack of it whilst *you* prate in a court."

The laugh now turned against Montmorenci, in which the young King heartily joined. The scene was altogether an extraordinary one. It was one of mirth, and yet too serious not to alarm the fears of Burgundy and the Countess of Artois, since they had all along apprehended that the citizens of Ghent, in order to terminate the war, would throw themselves upon the government of France, to the final exclusion of the Earl of Flanders. All their hopes, therefore, rested in rendering fruitless the attempts at negociation on the part of the rebels, and to induce Charles immediately to commence hostilities in Flanders. The return of Sir Simon to Ghent was a thing by all means to be prevented, since *his* detention as a *prisoner* would,

for the present, prevent all farther attempts at negociation on the part of the White Hoods with the King of France.

The Countess resolved to make a bold effort to procure the end she desired. Fully aware that she was secure of being supported by the Duke of Burgundy, she advanced immediately before the throne, and thus addressed the King: "My gracious prince, it is with pain I now intrude upon you, but the interests of the common weal demand that I should speak plainly. I know something of this man, who comes here as the chief of a deputation from his party. He has twenty times ere this acted in the same capacity; but had he really been the honest man he would make your grace believe, by the boldness of his speech and the bluntness of his manners, there now would exist no necessity for his acting the part of mediator. I know him to be an artful insurgent, the instigator of rebellion, one who leads even elders to insurrection. It was this very burgomaster who, in company with the artful John Lyon, and the infamous Peter du Bois, once forced himself into my presence at

a banquet I gave to the citizens of Bruges. I now bid you beware of him; his assumed simplicity is but the cloak of deceit. I openly proclaim him an arch-traitor, and that he comes hither more as a spy upon your majesty, than as an envoy."

"This is indeed a serious charge," said the King; "and yet there is something about Sir Simon that would make us, lady, think you judged too harshly of him; for plain manners and plain dealing we have been taught to believe, from the example of our constable, are sure notes and signs of honesty."

"Yet there is one question I must ask," said the Duke of Bungundy, "that seems to me of import. Were you really, Sir Simon, in company with John Lyon and Du Bois, when they so daringly forced themselves into the presence of the Countess, at her banquet at Bruges?"

"I was with them, I grant," replied Sir Simon; "but I was not one of those who either proposed or wished to intrude myself at the supper of any dame, however noble. And

how that banquet *concluded*, the Countess herself may best tell you."

"Still you admit you were present," said the Duke, "and in company with two of the most daring leaders of this rebellion. The circumstance is alone sufficient to excite the worst suspicions. Your grace must not let this man pass. There is good reason to suspect he does not mean well, especially since he came hither without the necessary permission. We have to thank the Countess of Artois for the prudence of her suggestions."

"If I am to be dealt with," said Sir Simon, "according to the prudent suggestions of the lady of Artois, I would beg a priest to shrive me, and a clerk to make my testament, for I should look for little else than the fate of John Lyon."

"What mean you, madman," exclaimed the Countess, "by these dark insinuations. Do you dare to question my honour, or the faith of my dealings? Do you presume to impugn my name? and in this presence! Base-born churl as you are, is it for such as you to attack the fair fame of a noble lady?"

"You are apt, madam," replied Sir Simon, "in comprehending all I mean. I charge you with nothing in direct terms, for I know well you would bear me down, though I spoke with the tongue of truth itself. I do not attack your fair fame; but a fair fame cannot cancel a foul deed. And low born, as you are pleased to call me, (yet I am not so low born either, for I am something in my native city, as chief burgo master and master of the goldsmiths' company, to say nothing of the honour of my knighthood,) yet I would rather be the poorest wretch that walks the face of the earth, than bear about with me a heart in whose storehouse I could look to find nothing but base metals and bastard gold, acts gilt over to the world, but worthless as dross."

"Hold your peace, insolent man," said the Countess, "nor dare thus to give licence to your tongue in the presence of majesty."

"I may more easily hold my peace," continued Sir Simon, "than you can quiet a little voice that will some time or other speak to you, day and night, and bid you remember a poor

girl, an orphan, whose father died (I do not say how) at your banquet."

"Have done with this," said the Duke of Burgundy. "I arrest you, Sir Simon, for having past hither without permission from the council, according to the tenor of the proclamation, and on suspicion of your being a spy. Your fellow-citizens, who attend you, must also remain prisoners. Conduct them all to the dungeons of the castle. I act in this as guardian to the youthful King, to save him from danger."

"Nay, uncle," said Charles, "you shall not be thus rigid. We do not fear these men; let them go hence in safety; and for Sir Simon, we judge better of him than you do. Give him liberty."

"No," said Sir Oliver de Clisson, interfering, "these men must not return to Ghent at the present moment. Should we suffer them to do so after the proclamation, we contradict our own act, and shew it to be useless; other unauthorised deputations will intrude upon us; and at the present time, when we are about to march

against these Flemings, they may carry back intelligence injurious to our cause. You may use them well, my prince, but they must remain prisoners."

"We are loth to lay violent hands upon them," replied the King, "since they came hither trusting our good faith; but we must not run counter to the opinions of wiser and older heads than our own. Sir Simon, you and your fellow-citizens are prisoners to France. Give up your swords."

"There, your grace," said Sir Simon, "there is mine; and I can safely say it has a clear conscience, clear as its bright blade, for it has never yet been dipt in the blood of a fellow-creature. I am a man of peace, and act more with the sword of justice, in the town-hall of my own city, than with one of battle in the open field. All the deputations, and they have been many, that I have headed, have all been in the hope to obtain peace; and so they have at last brought me to be a prisoner. But I would crave a boon of your grace's majesty."

"Say it," replied the King, "and if it be

one that we can grant, consistent with our duty, it shall not be denied."

"My lord King," said Sir Simon, "I have hitherto been housed and cared for, and lodged fitting my condition and my name as an honest man; but as honesty is not always a shield against the evil accidents of this life, I once got into a fray which consigned me for some time to the Earl's prisons of Ecclo. I was innocent, and I forgive those who sent me there, since, if they believed me guilty, they did right, and they could only, by putting me in prison, give me the penalty of the deed of which I was accused as a party concerned. They could *not* give me the *guilt* of it — for guilt would have made a prison still worse to me. But, somehow or other, ever since that period, I have looked with terror upon stone walls, iron bars, and double locks."

"And what has this mischance you speak of to do with the boon you would request of us?" enquired the King.

"I will tell you anon, noble young King," replied Sir Simon; "and it may be you may

learn something from a man who has seen much of the world, whilst he had power, considerable of its kind, in no less a city than that of Ghent. A man in this world, (continued the good knight, again returning to his favourite metaphor,) is often like a piece of gold — the metal may be good in itself, and yet lie unknown and neglected, till it is brought into the hands of the smith. Then it takes a fair surface, as men are polished by good breeding, and so being stamped, sometimes with the head of a king, it becomes a thing of consequence, like a man in high place. The coin may then be in the pouch of a king himself, and thus passing from one to another, from a nobleman to a knight, and from him to a civilian, it may at length go so low as to find its way as the last coin in the pocket of a prisoner in a dungeon. Now the moral I would draw from this is, to shew your majesty that nothing in this world is permanent, and that the greatest man on earth, like the noble coin, may be brought to go down from the highest place to the lowest station."

The King smiled at this long harangue of

Sir Simon, and again asked, what it could possibly have to do with the boon he would request?

"Why," answered Sir Simon, "the consideration of these things should teach us all, high and low, rich and poor, to feel for one another; since (yet may your grace never find it so, with the blessing of God and the Virgin!) since even a king himself, by the changes of this world, may be brought low; and that, too, by good intentions, even as I am now in my trouble. I would, therefore, beg your grace to *feel for me;* and if I must be a prisoner, to keep me such on my word of honour — a prisoner at large, but not to send me to a dungeon, nor these my honest companions, like rebels and malefactors. None of us have ever drawn a sword; kind young King, look, then, with pity upon us!"

The tears stood in the eyes of the disconsolate Sir Simon, as he made this appeal to the feelings of Charles, who, sensibly moved by the simplicity of the goldsmith, could not but think his uncle and the Countess dealt hardly with him.

"We will accept your word of honour, and that of your friends," replied Charles; "you shall all of you remain prisoners on your parole; and we leave to your own sense of this indulgence the desire not to abuse it."

Sir Simon, who dreaded nothing so much as a second time being confined within the walls of a prison, gratefully acknowledged this act of liberality in the young King, pledged his word, on the honour of a knight, both for himself and his companions, neither to take up arms, nor to attempt an escape, whilst under the power of France.

The Duke of Burgundy made some objections to this indulgence, on the score that it was dangerous thus to leave one at large who had incurred the suspicion of being a spy; but De Clisson, who was of a nobler mind, approved the conduct of the young King, at the same time advising that Sir Simon and his companions should be kept about the court, in order to be under the eye of the council, for fear of their holding intercourse with the enemy. De Montmorenci, who foresaw much amusement that might arise

from the simplicity of the goldsmith, and certain tricks he meant to play off upon him, highly approved the measure, which was instantly adopted.

Apartments were assigned to the unlucky members of this fruitless deputation, and they were forthwith conducted to them, in order that the council might pursue their deliberations on the measures necessary to be taken in the march against the Flemings. Charles, with the impatience of boyhood, eagerly followed a new pursuit. Delighted at the thoughts of playing the man, and wearing armour in an actual contest, he forgot his desire to go out a hawking, and talked of nothing but the expedition. De Clisson rejoiced to see this martial spirit in his young prince, yet insisted on a greater time for preparation; but the King would scarcely hear of it, so great was his impatience.

On the same day the Countess departed to raise her people, having previously induced the Duke of Burgundy to promise her that he would so arrange matters, that the allied army

should attempt to enter Flanders by the bridge Commines.

A few days after the departure of Margaret of Artois, the King of France received intelligence that the Lord Lewis de Male had reached Lille in safety, after a perilous escape from his enemies, and that he was now collecting a powerful army to join the King, in order to attack the White Hoods in full force. In the meantime the rebels, elevated by their late successes, were more intent upon subduing the town of Oudenarde, which they had besieged, than in watching the movements of the Earl and his party, since, in fact, they held both in contempt, thinking themselves invincible after the capture of Bruges.

CHAP. VII.

We shall not dwell upon the various intrigues that passed, either on the part of the rebels or of the French, in carrying on the war, which the latter had now openly proclaimed against the former. These intrigues will be found amply detailed by the historians of the time. Suffice it to say, that Philip Von Artaveld made a fruitless attempt to obtain the alliance of the English against the French; and that the Duke of Burgundy, ever mindful of his own interest, and impatient to wear the coronet of Flanders on his own head, so successfully managed his intrigues, that when Lewis de Male joined with the French, and brought up his forces, he was held but *secondary* in that very quarrel which had been originally instituted in order to restore him to his dominions. The Earl was not consulted on any material point, nor was he

even summoned to take a place in the council of the French king.

Lewis severely felt these slights and indignities, but he had no means to redress himself; so that the French appeared to act between him and his rebellious people, like the old fable, where two dogs are said to be fighting for a bone, and a third comes and carries it off.

Whatever were the sentiments of Sir Walter d'Anghien, he still faithfully adhered to his uncle's cause, nor did he suffer the indignation he felt at these proceedings on the part of the French, to slacken his own exertions in the path of duty. Conscious that it was impossible the Earl could now break with France, he avoided every thing that could lead to a rupture, or increase the jealousy of Burgundy.

Another powerful motive to stimulate Sir Walter to honourable exertion, was the presence of Anna, she having accompanied Lewis in this expedition; for the Earl was not insensible of the obligations he owed to this heroic maid, and, anxious to preserve both her life and honour, he

had not dared, in the present distracted state of the country, to leave her at Lille; nor could he confide her to the care of the Countess, who (independent of her personal dislike to Anna) was now busied in raising her men-at-arms in Artois, and was by no means a proper guardian for the unfortunate orphan of a rebel leader. It was at first determined that Anna should be placed within a religious sanctuary, when, upon the very eve of her departure, the convent that had been chosen for her security, was burnt and pillaged by the White Hoods, the miserable habitants suffering every indignity civil war could inflict. After this outrage, the Earl and Sir Walter d'Anghien judged it better for Anna's safety, that she should accompany them in their expedition to join the French army, where, although she must necessarily remain in the bosom of war and tumult, she was at least secure of brave and devoted friends, who would guard her at the risk of their lives; and, should a battle prove inevitable with the rebels, they could then, when driven to extremity, place her

in some convent near the scene of action, till the fate of the field should be decided.

When Lewis de Male had joined the French, and found how indifferently he was received by his allies, he became yet more anxious to keep Anna from the French court. She was, therefore, held apart in the utmost privacy, attended by one of her own sex, who had accompanied her from Lille; and it was given out, both by Sir Walter and Lewis, that the damsel they had brought with them was an orphan, under the guardianship of the Earl, for whose safety he felt greatly anxious.

In consequence of this circumstance, and the little cordiality that subsisted between the French and the Earl, it so chanced that neither Anna nor Sir Walter met with Sir Simon de Bête, though he was still a prisoner on his parole at the court of Charles. The elders who had borne him company, being considered of less importance, from having assumed less consequence than the honest goldsmith, had been suffered to return to Ghent, in exchange for

some French prisoners, who became such by falling into the hands of the White Hoods soon after the proclamation of war.

All things were now in readiness to commence the march against the rebels, when the Earl received intelligence from Gilbert Matthew of the sickness of the Countess of Artois. She was said to be lingering under some disorder for which the leeches could give no account, and that her spirits were so affected by it, that she appeared to look on every thing about her with perfect apathy. At the present moment, it was impossible Lewis could leave his station to attend the sick bed of his mother; he was, therefore, obliged to bid Gilbert Matthew return to the Countess of Artois, strictly enjoining him, in case of her death before the termination of the war, that he should keep the event as secret as possible, and lose no time in communicating it to the *Earl himself*, before it could be made known to the Duke of Burgundy and the French council; since Lewis resolved that, should his mother die during the unsettled state of his affairs, he would instantly do homage

to Charles, in his own person, for the inheritance of Artois, before Burgundy could have time to interfere with his dangerous intrigues, or attempt to wrest from him a possession, which it was long suspected the Duke had looked upon hereafter to become his own. Gilbert promised to act faithfully, and departed.

A debate now arose, by what pass the territory of Flanders should be entered by the allies, and the Duke of Burgundy (who never doubted but that the Countess would join him at Commines with her men-at-arms,) succeeded in gaining over the constable to his opinion; so that it was finally resolved, the attempt to cross the river Lis should be made at the bridge of Commines.

On the morrow, therefore, the King, the Earl, and all their people, departed on this expedition; and, having gained the banks of the river, Charles was quartered in an abbey near the spot, where the council met to determine upon what measures should be next adopted.

The passage of the river was, indeed, one of more danger than had been anticipated. Ursula,

an artful and useful instrument in the hands of Du Bois, had been so ably tutored by him, that, under colour of betraying the White Hoods to the Countess, she had more than once become the means of assisting his plans; since Margaret of Artois, with all her spirit for intrigue and deep cunning, was, nevertheless, a slave to her superstitious belief in the power of witchcraft, so that, like many cunning people, she had outwitted herself by confiding in Ursula. It must be remembered, that it was the Countess who had suggested, through the agency of Ursula, the burning of the village in France, in order to exasperate the French, so that they would no longer hesitate to join her cause. The wily sorceress communicated the plan to Du Bois, who (conscious how vain would prove the attempt on his part to conciliate the French, when the Duke of Burgundy was heir to the Earl of Flanders,) had allowed his band to commit the outrage; rightly judging that such an act would confirm the Countess in her blind trust of Ursula. No sooner had it done so, than Du Bois meditated a deep-laid scheme for

the destruction of the Countess and her forces at Commines, and employed Ursula to become the instrument of his artful policy with Margaret of Artois.

Sir Walter d'Anghien, who had gladly taken the field in support of his uncle's cause, and was now with his people on the banks of the river Lis, ever mindful of the duties of his station, evinced a degree of prudence *before* the contest began, that he seldom shewed when he was once engaged in it. He now considered that in attempting the passage of the bridge into the enemies' country, the utmost precaution should be used, and that it would be well previously to reconnoitre the spot where the vanguard of the army was to cross the Lis.

D'Anghien, during his residence at the French court, by his bravery and courteous bearing, had made some friends, notwithstanding the cold manner in which his uncle was received. He had also gained the esteem of the two gay young lords, De Montmorenci and St. Py, by tilting with them in the most gallant manner. Young men are less susceptible of

party jealousy than those of a more mature and calculating age; so that, whilst many a grave and subtle courtier looked coldly upon D'Anghien, for no other reason than because the royal Dukes did so, (for courtiers are the very mirrors of royalty, that reflect even the shadows of its fancy,) Sir Walter was a favourite with many of the young nobles, and thoughtless knights, who regarded him for himself and not for his party.

Of this number was Montmorenci and St. Py. Conspicuous for their fopperies at court, they indulged their affectation, and sought to be admired for qualities their better judgment would have condemned, but for the vanity of youth, which, rather than want distinction, will often seek it by the most frivolous means. Yet, these fopperies were forgotten, when the two young lords followed the bent of their natural spirit, which led them to brave deeds and manly enterprise. D'Anghien knew well their character, and it was to them he now resolved to address himself to gain their assistance in reconnoitering the bridge, before the vanguard should attempt to cross it.

They gladly joined Sir Walter, and advanced with the utmost precaution. They soon discovered that the strength and supports of the bridge, beneath the arches, had been so artfully weakened, if not actually destroyed, that no sooner would a body of men be upon it, than it must give way, and inevitably consign them to death. They also discovered that Peter du Bois was stationed on the opposite side with a considerable force, ready to take advantage of the mischance he had prepared for his enemies. D'Anghien now held a brief council with his companions, the result of which we are about to detail; and should our narration be something longer than the nature of this work would perhaps warrant, yet the circumstances to be stated are of so extraordinary a character, of such interest in an historical point of view, that it would hardly be doing justice to the subject to pass them over slightly.

Having come to a resolution in what manner they should act, D'Anghien and his companions dispatched a messenger to Sir Oliver de Clisson, simply to inform him of the state of the bridge;

and that before it could be crossed, he must provide timber, and all things necessary to repair it. The news was a stunning blow to Sir Oliver, yet he lost no time in dispatching people to procure whatever might be necessary, and, whilst he was consulting before the bridge of Commines what must be done, D'Anghien and his friends continued to follow the course of the river, in order to find out the most advantageous place to attempt to execute the purpose upon which they had resolved.

At length they came to a spot where they observed some trees near a hut, which probably belonged to one of those poor people who gained a livelihood by fishing in the Lis. A thick grove of trees stood on the opposite banks of the river. "There," said Sir Walter to his companions, "there would be a most desirable spot for us to attempt our purpose, could we but obtain that boat which I see yonder near the margin of the river. Let us hasten on before the boatman can descry us."

They did so; but the fisherman observing several armed knights coming towards the

place where he was engaged in angling, and fearing they were the enemy, pushed off, and made for the opposite bank of the river as fast as the current of the stream would admit. "If he gains the banks," said Sir Walter, "our enterprise is over; he may give intelligence to the White Hoods, and they will be down upon us. Here! help me to disarm; I will dash into the stream, and at all events secure the boat."

In great haste his companions assisted Sir Walter to disarm, who no sooner found himself freed from the cumbrous weight of his steel casings, than he plunged into the river, bearing nothing with him but his dagger. Expert in swimming, strong and active, D'Anghien gained the boat, placed his hand upon the gunwale, and was safe within her, before the affrighted fisher could recover from his surprise. Sir Walter now promised the man to do him no injury, on condition that he would carry the boat back again towards the hut, threatening him with instant death, should he refuse compliance or give the least alarm.

The fisherman, who saw no chance of escape, complied, and before Sir Walter reached the banks, he had farther induced him, by the promise of reward, to become useful to his friends by pointing out a place where two other boats could be procured, and a quantity of cordage, highly necessary for their purpose.

By this time some of the men-at-arms had joined D'Anghien's party, and they now hastened to carry their plan into execution. For this purpose they fixed a strong stake securely in the ground, and attached to it a cord. Sir Walter then again entered the boat, and crossed the stream with a few of his people. They then drove a second stake into the opposite bank, to which they also affixed the same cord, and finally brought it back again as they recrossed the river; having by these means contrived a plan, that the boat, being filled with as many persons as it could contain, they might with ease cross over by simply holding on to the cord without the assistance of oars or rudder, and in a way the most rapid for their purpose. The

boat being cleared, a single person could return with it, to convey over others, who were desirous to pass to the opposite banks of the Lis.

"Now," said Sir Walter to his brave companions, "all is ready. Let us not delay our enterprise. Let us attempt a gallant deed, or fall if we fail in it. If we surprise Du Bois and his rabble rout, we shall do an act for which all Flanders will rejoice. We are knights well armed and disciplined, and though our numbers are but few in comparison with our enemies, still we have but to deal with beggarly mechanics, armed with clubs and staves, who will fly before our lances of Bourdeaux steel, as the fox flies before the noble hounds that pursue him."

All present expressed themselves impatient to embark, and whilst the esquire of Sir Walter assisted in again completely arming his master, the young Lord de St. Py, desirous to be the first to cross the river, jumped into the boat, followed by some of his companions, and, gaining the opposite bank, they immediately con-

cealed themselves within the thick grove of trees, as it had been previously arranged they should do, after leaving the boat.

Sir Walter also embarked with many other knights who had been summoned by Montmorenci to join in this enterprise. At length Sir Oliver de Clisson heard of their attempt, and, struck with the madness of such a daring act, as he deemed it, he exclaimed bitterly against the rashness of D'Anghien, and forbid any of his own battalion to join the expedition, considering those who had already undertaken it as lost men, since he had learnt that Du Bois was supported by not less than ten thousand of the rebels.

Yet willing to afford Sir Walter's party all the assistance within his power, the constable, in order to divert the attention of the enemy, (lest they should surprise those who had crossed the Lis,) caused the arbalisters to shoot from their cross-bows upon the people of Du Bois, who were stationed on the causeway opposite the bridge. The skirmish was hotly carried on, and the van of the allies now appeared as if

they were determined to effect their passage over the river, notwithstanding every obstacle.

In the mean time, the boats continued to pass over all such knights and esquires as resolved to join D'Anghien; and so eager were they to follow his example, that they pressed on with one accord to the spot, and, crowding upon each other, a contest prevailed which should be the first; so that it was with considerable difficulty any degree of order could be preserved, to prevent accidents from overloading the boats as they crossed the river.

The danger of these bold adventurers was extreme; for had Du Bois entertained but the least suspicion of what was going on, he could with ease have surrounded the grove where the knights concealed themselves, have hemmed them in, and cut them to pieces at pleasure. To add to their danger, the evening drew on apace, so that in a little time the boats could no longer cross; and the clouds that hung thick and heavy during the day, now poured down their accumulated burthens in torrents of rain.

The brave knights, who were stationed in the

grove, had nothing with them but their arms; nor was there any place where they could procure the least refreshment or repose. But, undaunted in spirit, they buckled on their helmets and their arms as securely as possible; and, forming themselves into a compact body, they resolved to march, though scarcely more than four hundred in number, against Du Bois and his host.

Holding their banners and pennons erect before them, they began their march through a deep and heavy marsh near the river, led on by D'Anghien, St. Py, and Montmorenci, resolving that they would that night make good their quarters in the town of Commines, or perish before its walls. But the ground through which they had to pass impeded their progress at every step, and sunk with them above the steel solerets that guarded their feet. Notwithstanding these difficulties, they kept their ranks, and advanced undismayed towards the scene of action.

Du Bois, from the advantageous station he occupied upon the causeway, descried these men coming towards him, and exclaimed, "What

do I see? What devil has conjured up this armed host of madmen? How have they crossed the river, and yet escaped the bridges? But hell that sent them forth, shall soon receive them back again. Before morning dawns, not a man shall live to tell how he came to this spot."

Peter le Nuitée, who acted as second in command under Du Bois, laughed at the knights for their presumption; and proposed that they should instantly fall upon them, and offer them up that night as a supper for the crows.

"No," said Du Bois; "let them go on with their exploit; let them advance hither; we have the advantage of position, for we are on high ground, whilst they are in a marsh. When the night comes on, we will down upon them, and cut them off; for by that time they must be spent with fatigue, and weary. Though they are cased in iron, they are not made of it, but are men like ourselves."

"What must we do, then?" enquired Le Nuitée.

"Let our men," said Du Bois, "remain

where they are for the present, and let them appear not to notice those who are advancing; thus shall we have these gold fish," continued Du Bois, with his accustomed sarcastic grin, as he alluded to the gay armour of the knights; "thus shall we have them with their glittering scales upon their backs, safe in our nets, before they can find out the hooks we hang to catch them."

The orders of Du Bois were strictly obeyed; his men continued in a body upon the causeway at the foot of the bridge, in silence, waiting for their enemies. In the meantime, the evening drew on apace, yet it was not so dark but that De Clisson could perfectly well observe what was passing on the opposite side the river. And now, looking towards the marsh, he burst into a passionate exclamation of grief and dismay, when he beheld the flower of the knighthood, that composed the allied armies, the youngest and the bravest, marching on to meet inevitable death. At the sight of this, Sir Oliver lost all patience; and his blood ran cold within his veins, as he exclaimed, "Oh, my

brave knights, my gallant friends! You are lost, and I live to see it. I look upon you advancing to death, without the means to aid or save you. But by St. Dennis!" continued the valiant constable, "I will not play the woman, and wail, whilst a chance remains that I might *act* to serve you. I, who forbade my people to follow on this mad enterprise, now give permission to all to pass over, if they can in any manner gain a passage. Let them cast timbers athwart the bridge. Collect boughs from the trees. Throw down your shields to make a footing; do what you can, my brave followers, to save that gallant band, or to die with them."

No sooner was this command issued by De Clisson, than every knight, esquire, and man-at-arms, who composed the vanguard, hastened to be of the rescue. With the utmost alacrity they brought forward planks of wood, and whatever they could collect, to make a footing to pass the bridge, casting down even their shields to facilitate their purpose. The cross-bow men continued to pour their shafts upon the White Hoods, who, thus warmly attacked, scarcely

knew what they did — so distracted were they between the enemy from the marsh, and those who, stationed on the opposite side of the river, were using every exertion to become the rescue of D'Anghien and his party.

But notwithstanding these most strenuous exertions, the van were soon obliged to give over the attempt, for the night closed in upon them in such obscurity, that they could no longer act. The scene was rendered yet more dark and dreary by the thick clouds and the heavy rain that pattered down in all directions. Still, anxious for the safety of their friends, neither De Clisson nor his people could leave the spot, and they remained in awful suspense, awaiting the return of that light which they expected would shew them nothing but the objects of their anxiety a heap of fallen men.

But neither darkness, nor danger, nor toil, nor rain, nor hunger, nor thirst, could subdue the spirit of these brave and self-devoted adventurers. Though struggling at every step, they had now gained the very centre of the marsh, and there they made a halt, since it was so dark

that to move forward was impossible; and here they resolved to stand, through the long and cold night, under arms, and ready for battle. They were now ankle deep in water, whilst the rain that beat upon their helmets ran from them like the channel of a sluice, so incessant was the torrent.

D'Anghien and St. Py, who both knew the country, determined, even in the midst of these difficulties, to act as scouts, and all the night long did they at times advance, even to the very outposts of their enemy, to observe their measures, and to guard their own people from a surprise, encouraging them both by their words and their example. At length the cold and dim light of morning gradually broke through clouds so heavy that they looked like lead, and gave a grey and dismal appearance to every surrounding object. The rain still fell, yet with less violence; and although the morning-light presented a sad spectacle to the eye of these brave men, pale from fatigue, hunger, and want of rest, their bright arms tarnished, their pennons drooping and dripping with water, yet still it shewed

them equally firm and unchanged in spirit, resolved never to give way, but to pursue their enterprise even to death.

During the whole of the night they had preserved a profound silence, lest they should draw upon themselves the attention of the enemy. No murmur or complaint had escaped their lips; and, notwithstanding all the difficulties by which they were surrounded, they neither broke their ranks nor laid down their spears and shields.

The hour now approached when Du Bois, taking advantage of the first dawn of light, prepared to come down upon them with the utmost caution.

D'Anghien saw the movement. "Now, my friends, now," he exclaimed, "since our numbers are too few to advance to the attack, let us stand firm to meet it. When the Flemish dogs come down upon us, let us each, to a man, shout our war-cry, and our very voices shall strike terror into their hearts, whilst our sharp spears receive their bodies on the point. They are rude and undisciplined; they cannot cope with a body of chosen knights. They come! they come!—

now close your ranks, advance your spears, and shout with me, 'Our lady for Flanders! St. Sebastion for the lion!'"

In a moment all was changed. The wide extent of open country, which hitherto had been wrapped in profound silence, now rang with the cry of war, the confusion of the *melée*, and the shouts of the warriors. The tumult was fearful, and meeting the ear of De Clisson and his companions, as they were stationed on the opposite bank, they started up, and De Clisson, finding it impossible to join his beloved comrades, rode up and down by the side of the river, shouting with them, and talking aloud, as if he was actually engaged by their side, and would encourage them to the onset; varying his shouts and his exclamations according as he observed the fluctuation of the field.

"Our lady for France!" exclaimed the constable, "St. Denis for D'Anghien! Gallantly encountered. A body of men that would delight the eyes of Du Guesclin himself, could the dead look upon the living! and drawn up in a compact body — their lances like a hedge, to

impale the rogues that rush upon them! Now Bourdeaux steel be firm and sharp as you are wont, and the day is our own. Aye, shout my brave knights, shout your gallant war-cry; you shall yet cry victory; and yon rebels and mechanical rascals, tailors, weavers, and burghers, cry, as you do, with terror and surprise. See, my lord of Burgundy," he continued, addressing the Duke, who was now by his side, "see, the rascals are falling like rotten sheep in their own pastures. False-hearted, cowardly knaves! Aye, now, that is right; D'Anghien follows up the rout. Down with them; spare none; knock out their brains. See! see! they fly! St. Py follows — D'Anghien leads on. But, gracious Heaven!" exclaimed De Clisson, "he is mad; he is gone too far."

"Who is that fellow," said the Duke of Burgundy, "that, surrounded by a crew of desperate ruffians, armed with iron staves, makes such a stand, as if resolved to gain the day?"

"I know the wretch," replied De Clisson, "for he wears the armour of a knight; it is Du Bois. D'Anghien will be surrounded; he

must be cut off; they will murder him. Oh! I cannot look upon the slaughter of so brave a spirit;" and the constable, used as he was to battle, and accustomed to see the young and the brave fall by his side, turned aside his head, and shuddered.

"Look, look again, my lord," said Burgundy.

"D'Anghien is still alive," exclaimed De Clisson, in almost breathless anxiety; "he fights like Du Guesclin. Du Bois strikes with his axe, it falls only on his shield. Oh, brave D'Anghien! all the Saints fight for you, else you must be lost. But what do I see? St. Py comes to the rescue; Montmorenci follows him; he is saved; thank God! thank God! And look who falls?"

"It is Du Bois," said Burgundy; "he is pierced through by D'Anghien's spear; see, his men bear him off the field."

"But the villain is not dead," exclaimed De Clisson, "for he points with his hand to D'Anghien. They follow, they follow; the day must be our own. On, on, my brave friends; St. Denis be with you! Hark! again they shout; aye,

our lady for Flanders! our lady for D'Anghien!" Thus did the gallant constable continue to shout, and to charge up and down the side of the river, where, though unable to share the danger of the contest, or to aid the success of his friends, he partook, in the most animated manner, of all the fluctuating hopes and fears, of all the enthusiasm of battle; and seeing his comrades finally victorious, half frantic with joy, he snatched his own banner from the hand of the body squire that bore it, and exclaimed, as he waved it to and fro, high in the air, "Victory! victory! victory for France! Victory for D'Anghien!" and so he continued shouting, as if to make the victors sensible that *he* witnessed and shared in the glory of their triumph.

Their victory was, indeed, beyond their utmost hopes. Their enemies fled before them, whilst Du Bois, dangerously wounded, and unable to direct the movement of his people, escaped but with life, as he was hurried off the field of action, borne on the shields of his own men-at-arms. Again did the vanguard of De Clisson renew their exertions; and in less than three hours

the bridge was rendered passable. Sir Oliver then poured down upon the rebels; they were completely defeated, and above four thousand left dead upon the spot.

The allied armies, victorious in their first onset, now prepared to cross the Lis. Charles the Sixth of France, the Earl of Flanders, and all their knights and followers, entered in triumph within the precincts of Commines. The King was lodged in an abbey, from which all the monks had fled, in fear and amazement, during the scene of the morning. The town was taken, burnt, and pillaged; and before night, the whole of the army managed to pass over in safety that very bridge of Commines that had been so artfully designed to become the means of their destruction.

CHAP. VIII.

Although, in the preceding chapter, we have given an account of the daring action, in which (comparatively speaking) a handful of men succeeded in defeating a host of their opponents, it is not our intention to detail the various interesting events that occurred previous to the battle of Rosebecque. Suffice it to say, that although the French still held their footing in Flanders, they could not yet be termed the victors of the White Hoods, since Von Artaveld maintained a powerful force, and, assisted by Du Bois, who was now recovered from his wounds, eagerly desired to meet the Earl and his allies in a regular battle, that might at once decide the fate of these long-contested quarrels. The rebels had gone too far to conciliate, or to look for mercy; nor could the people of Ghent hope for any peace that would uphold their liberties, unless it was obtained by victory.

Philip Von Artaveld, determined and active in his measures, levied so powerful a force, that scarcely did he leave in Ghent any one man capable of bearing arms, excepting a sufficient number to guard the city from surprise. With a body of not less than sixty thousand men, Philip once more took the field, and advanced to meet the King of France, who was now quartered, with the Flemings of the Earl's party, near to Rosebecque, there suffering many hardships, both from the season of the year and the incessant exertions they had made to keep the field, in opposition to the rebels.

Between Rosebecque and the open extensive country which lay before it was situated a small eminence or hill, called *Mont d'Or;* and about half a league from the foot of this hill appeared a thick grove of trees, guarded in front by a deep fosse. Here it was Von Artaveld encamped; and it was soon understood by both armies that a decisive battle must speedily ensue. The greater part of Von Artaveld's men were armed with steel caps and haubergeons, with clubs sharply pointed with steel and bound with iron,

and each man wore by his side a long and broad-bladed knife. The companies of the different towns wore a peculiar habit, like a surcoat, worked with the arms of their city; and the banners of the various trades to which they belonged were carried by persons appointed for that service. Their engines of war consisted principally of cannon, the cross and long bow, and a sort of hand grenade. A stout band of English archers were also enlisted, (having stolen from Calais for that purpose,) at a high rate, to give their assistance. Thus armed and supported, Philip advanced, and on the 27th day of November, in the year of grace 1382, encamped in the plains near *Mont d'Or*, expecting that on the morrow the French would advance from Rosebecque to give him battle.

Upon that memorable night Von Artaveld gave a supper to all his chief captains, when the various plans and the order of the combat was discussed. After supper Philip addressed his companions in arms in the most animated man-

ner, representing to them the sufferings and injuries Ghent had sustained, and conjuring them, to a man, to support her freedom with the last drop of blood that flowed within their veins. Du Bois also addressed them; but whilst Philip Von Artaveld dwelt upon the justice of their cause in support of liberty, Du Bois talked only of revenge, and stimulated them to an unsparing attack on the morrow. These addresses raised the enthusiasm of the auditory to such a height, that they vowed the morrow should see them the victors of their enemies, or the vanquished of death.

The supper ended, Von Artaveld recommended a strict watch to be kept during the night, and that all the rest of his people should endeavour to recruit themselves by repose, in order that they might be the better enabled to combat on the morrow. Von Artaveld, exhausted by the unremitting exertions he had made during the day, retired early from the supper to his tent; Du Bois (whose tent was stationed next to Philip's) promising to become

the captain of the watch, and, if necessary, to apprise Von Artaveld, should any thing of import occur to require his presence.

All was profoundly still throughout the encampment of the insurgents, save when now and then the clink of arms was heard, or the cry of the guard from out-post to out-post, as they hailed each other at the stated hour of relief. The air was fresh and cold, and the moon, now in her wane, looked pale and sickly, as masses of dark and heavy clouds flitted before her; sometimes completely obscuring her light, or again faintly shewing her disk through their transparent circles and ridges, lightly tipped with silver. Then, as they floated onward before the wind, the heavens, and thousands of little twinkling stars, appeared from out the canopy of night, like "diamonds in an Ethiop's ear," more brilliant by contrast with the surrounding darkness. In various parts of the field large watch-fires had been kindled, some were still burning, and blazed high in the air, their flames eddying with the wind, whilst others lay but a heap of mouldering ashes.

Within the tent of Von Artaveld a small fire was still burning; and, though the night was cold, he had left the entrance partially open, in order that he might hear the least alarm, should any thing occur during the night to require his attention. Through this opening a ray of moonlight now and then stole in, as the clouds cleared for a moment to afford a melancholy light — a light that now gleamed upon one who sat watching the slumbers of Von Artaveld, as he rested on a rough bed within the tent, still partially armed, in readiness for any exigency.

The person who thus watched the slumbers of the young and valiant leader of the White Hoods was clad in the dress of a page, but of more than ordinary elegance, gay in colour, and richly ornamented. The jerkin was of light blue, embroidered with silver. A mantle, lined with minevar, was thrown carelessly over the shoulders; and from beneath the little blue velvet cap, adorned in front by a precious jewel, long tresses of black hair hung gracefully down the back and about the face. The figure of the page was light and elegant, though rather short

than tall; and there was altogether something in the air and appearance of the youth, that bespoke one more accustomed to the bower of peace than to the camp of war.

In this dress it would have been difficult, perhaps, immediately to have recognized the wearer, who was no other than the unhappy and guilty Bianca, whose character and errors are already known to the reader. She had accompanied Von Artaveld, who was fondly attached to her, in many of his expeditions, in the dress and character of his page. Her face now looked as beautiful as ever, but a cast of melancholy shaded her brow, and her lips, which hitherto were wont to smile to please Von Artaveld, were now fixed and motionless. The whole expression of her countenance denoted that serious and tranquil mood which partakes of no strong emotion, (neither of joy nor of deep sorrow,) but the settled melancholy of a wounded spirit. Her large black eyes for some time were fixed upon her sleeping paramour, till, raising her head, she looked upon the stream of moonlight that gleamed within the tent, and her eyes

became suffused with tears. She sighed deeply, and turned again towards Von Artaveld. "I will cast my mantle about him," she softly murmured, "for the night is cold, and he rests on a poor couch; to-morrow I may not do so much for him — to-morrow!"

Again she mused, and again a deep sigh burst from her bosom, as she stooped down and gently placed her mantle upon Von Artaveld, to guard him from the night air. Whilst she did so, Philip started, for his mind was in too anxious a state to admit of that sound sleep, which is the privilege of health, ease, and innocence. Philip awoke, started up, but immediately remembering *where* he was, he gently chid Bianca for being still a watcher; and asked why she had not sought repose.

"No," said Bianca, "I will watch by you this night. Von Artaveld, I am sick at heart; and I would fain acquit myself well towards you, for you have been ever kind to me — I am not ungrateful."

"And wherefore watch by me to-night in particular?" enquired Philip; "you speak, too,

Bianca, in a sad melancholy strain. You should support my spirits, that I may meet the dangers of to-morrow as a man; you should not thus depress me."

"I would not willingly do so," answered Bianca; "but my heart is heavy within me. Oh! Von Artaveld, who shall say what to-morrow may bring forth? My mind misgives me, that something sad may happen. *To-morrow*, you may be a corpse, and I may be —" continued Bianca, as the tears fell fast down her pale cheeks — "but what can I be more than I have long been — an outcast?"

"An outcast!" said Von Artaveld, eagerly repeating the word, "*you* an outcast! Have I, then, Bianca, been so unmindful of your comforts, that you should call yourself by so sad a name?"

"No," said Bianca; "you have been all that is kind to me. Could kindness sanctify dishonour, I might be happy. But oh! Von Artaveld, you know not the heart of the miserable woman you have taken to be the guilty partner of your lawless love."

Von Artaveld looked astonished at hearing

Bianca address him in such an unwonted strain. He expressed his anxiety, and conjured her to tell him plainly the cause of these expressions, so new to him from her lips.

"Yes," replied Bianca, "yes, I will unload the burthen that oppresses my soul — a burthen greater by the effort I have long made to bear it alone. This hour, Philip, is a solemn one between us; it may be, perhaps, the last of mutual confidence, and it shall be then entire. These tears that fall from my eyes give birth to a tenderness of sorrow I have not known for many years. My sufferings have been intense, hard and rigid as the rock which admits no part of the showers that fall upon it to soften its obdurate bosom. But I can weep now, thank God, I can shed a tear. I can, therefore, suffer without the frenzy of fevered sorrow. I can tell a sad tale in calm words."

"What tale? what mean you, sweetest Bianca?" said Von Artaveld; "speak, I conjure you. You know how much I would do for you; and, but for one sad error, I would have made you my wife."

"Yes, yes; there it is," replied Bianca; "I know all your generous care. Can you, can you pardon the wretch who has abused your confidence — who never loved you?"

Philip started, and dropt the hand of his beautiful mistress, which he had till now held within his own. He breathed short, walked some paces up and down his tent, and passing his hand hastily across his forehead, as if struggling to give utterance to his feelings, he at length said, "Bianca, I was not prepared for this. I thought you dearly loved, dearly requited my unbounded affection — but go on, I will try to bear it as a man; for I have the duties of a man to act, and to-morrow, perhaps, in doing them, I may lose, with life, all cause of sorrow — I did not think that any thing could so have moved me. Why tell me this at such a moment?"

Von Artaveld again passed his hand across his eyes, with a vehemence of manner that seemed to shew he was anxious to dash from his eye-lid the tear that had started and clung to it. Bianca advanced, threw herself on her

knees before him, and seizing his hand, passionately exclaimed, in a voice that bespoke the agitated state of her feelings, "Oh! forgive me; pardon a wretch, who at this moment would die to prove her gratitude to you; she speaks thus unkindly, but to prove the sincerity of the deep — deep remorse that fills her bosom. Bianca seeks but your pardon ere she dies ——"

"Dies!" exclaimed Von Artaveld, who forgot his own recent cause of pain in a generous feeling for Bianca; "dies! Oh, Bianca, what is this? Tell me, I conjure you, and, though no longer dear to you, if there is aught that I can do for your comfort or your safety, you may still command it."

"Hear me," said Bianca; "I will never rise from the earth where I now kneel at your feet, till I make a full confession of my guilt; till I have obtained that pardon from you, which I hope to find in Heaven. God has touched my heart; he has awakened in my soul the deep, long agonies of penitence. Hear me, and let the shame that now covers my brow with crimson, and renders me hateful even in my own eyes,

let it plead for mercy in yours — nay, give me your hand; to-morrow, I will not dare to ask it of you."

"Rise, Bianca, rise," said Von Artaveld. "Do not kneel to me! I know not what these words, that seem involved in some impenetrable mystery, would import. But there is such a heart-rending sorrow in your expressions, such a tone of misery in the accents of your tongue, that I cannot think them wild expressions, nor the dictates of distraction. Tell me all I am to learn; this suspense is terrible."

"I am indeed most wretched," said Bianca.

"I thought you otherwise," replied Von Artaveld; "that you were happy in my affection."

"The guilty never can know peace," said Bianca, "unless they are cold and senseless, like the common herd, that know no touch of human feeling. I have sought to find a solace for my woes in the misery of others — I have tasted of the bitter draught of vengeance — I have triumphed in the ruin that I caused — I have dared heaven itself, and all in requital of my

own wrongs, of my own sufferings; but I have never known one hour's peace — all has been tumult; my soul, like the tempestuous ocean, has swelled and burst in stormy agitation, casting death around, yet never resting in itself."

"Oh, let that troubled soul sink to peace within my bosom," said Von Artaveld, greatly affected by the distress he witnessed in Bianca; "there, there shall you find rest."

"No, no, it cannot be," replied Bianca, mournfully. "I have already too much injured, too much abused, the generous confidence you have shown to me. I loved my princely seducer, Lewis of Flanders. He basely deserted me to follow the virtuous daughter of a simple burgher: maddened by jealousy, I vowed to wreak a dreadful vengence. Still the fear of want, whilst misery and poverty stared me in the face, made me listen to your vows of love, and I added guilt to guilt by again becoming the mistress of a lawless affection; and in order to make you the instrument of my revenge upon the Earl, I joined with wretches to betray you to ruin."

"To what," exclaimed Von Artaveld; "to ruin! What do you mean?"

"Aye, to ruin," repeated Bianca; "I urged you to become a traitor to your prince. To humble Lewis even to the dust, to make him poor and abject, an outcast like myself, I urged you to rise in arms against him; and thus have I brought you (who have cherished, loved, and protected me even in infamy,) to misery, and I fear to death."

"No," said Philip; "if it be an act of guilt, you have not to answer for it. I have taken up arms in defence of the liberties of my native city; I have but followed the footsteps of my father."

"And you will share his fate," answered Bianca. "He was murdered."

"But I live," said Von Artaveld, "live to defend my country from oppression; and if I die it shall be in the field, not by the hand of the assassin. We are strong in arms, and Du Bois is both willing and able to unite heart and hand with me in the general cause."

"Du Bois is a villain," replied Bianca—"a

villain of the blackest dye. He it was who first persuaded me to induce you to join him: he has followed his own selfish purposes under the colour of acting for the benefit of Ghent. He has pursued his plans through a sea of guilt that I now shudder but to think upon. — Do not trust him."

"If this be true," said Von Artaveld, "I have trusted him too far already; but we are now so allied together, and upon the very eve of battle, that I dare not break with him. To separate *now* might bring on a quarrel that would end in the ruin of our cause."

"Have you given orders," enquired Bianca, "that the life of no one is to be spared in the battle to-morrow?"

"No," said Von Artaveld; "I have issued orders to spare all who yield themselves to mercy; and I have especially commanded that the life of our new opponent, the young King of France, should be held sacred; he is but a boy, and acts by the will of others."

"Du Bois then has abused the trust that you repose in him," answered Bianca; "for I

know he has especially instructed some of his own people to spare no one; and, above all, if opportunity occurs, that they should plunge the sword into the heart of the young King."

Von Artaveld appeared astonished at hearing this. "And who," (he enquired,) "is the agent of Du Bois in these deceitful dealings; who can convey his orders unknown to me?"

"Ursula," said Bianca, "Ursula, that fiend in woman's form. — she who first led my youth, by the path of temptation, from innocence to guilt. She is the chosen and active agent of Du Bois. I saw her but now glide into his tent. She bears his messages, and acts for him as a go-between in infamy; she does it often under colour of dealing in her accursed traffic of witchcraft, and so she rules the minds of the common people; they obey her with fear and trembling."

"She shall meet her doom, then," replied Philip. "If these things can be proved against her, and I live to win the field, to-morrow she shall suffer as the agent of infamy and disobedience. And now, Bianca, hear me. Should

I fall, I would yet provide for your safety. Take this purse, it contains more than sufficient to convey you from this country. Hear, and obey my directions."

"I do not need it," said Bianca; "I have too long shared your bounty to need gold. My resolution is taken, if you outlive to-morrow or if you perish. Yet I would do you one kind act before we part in this world for ever."

"If I fall, we part indeed," answered Von Artaveld; "but if I live as the victor for Ghent, Bianca shall share the triumph of Von Artaveld."

Bianca cast her eyes upon the ground, and said, in a low but firm voice, "if you live as a victor, or if you fall as a traitor, still we part for ever; but I will remember your generous care of me, even till that hour when the tomb shall close upon my guilt."

Von Artaveld again seized the hand of Bianca. There was such a solemnity in her countenance, such a deep melancholy, with the air of a decided resolution, in her manner, that he felt overpowered by her words, and, fearing to ask her

purpose, he could only look upon her in silence, awaiting what was to follow. After a moment's pause, she continued thus —

"Whilst you, Philip, were engaged at Bruges, I fell grievously sick at Ghent; the consequence, I believe, of my own disturbed thoughts, and the perpetual conflict of violent and agitating feelings. I was sick nearly to death; but I thank God, that sickness of the body will, I trust, give me health of soul. Thinking my death at hand, for the first time I looked upon my past life without the prejudice of passion. I looked, and shuddered to meet my God. In this state of mind I was found by a holy monk, who came to me to administer the last comforts of the church. He cherished the thoughts of penitence he found in me, and poured upon my wounded spirit the balm of peace and hope. He bid me look to the mercy of my Creator, and taught me, that to renounce a guilty life was the best sacrifice to deprecate the wrath of Heaven. From that hour I vowed to quit all worldy passions, hopes, and fears, and to consecrate the rest of my life

to him who can change the soul, as he will one day change the body from corruptible to incorruptible; may God accept my purpose."

Bianca paused again, as if overpowered by the strong emotions that agitated her mind. At length she continued — "Still mindful of my gratitude to you, I purposed to watch by you, to attend your steps with the sanctity of a sister's affection, till you should be free from danger, and then to quit you for ever. For this purpose I followed you to the camp in these habiliments that I wore as your page, before I was awakened to a sense of my own guilt and misery. I came hither but to-day, and this is the first hour I have found to tell you my purpose."

"And must I lose you, then?" said Von Artaveld; "must we part for ever? — is there no other way but this?"

"There is no other way for safety," replied Bianca; "since the holy monk has taught me we must not temporize with God. *He* demands the heart entire, uncorrupted. Penitence cannot avail us, if it shares the benefit of those sins it professes to renounce. After to-morrow,

I return to this venerable man. He has promised to dispose of me in a house of the penitent Ursulines in France."

Von Artaveld dropt the hand of Bianca, and, pressing both his own hands together, he emphatically exclaimed, "May God bless you! — We part indeed. Bianca, I have shared with you in sin; but I will not corrupt your mind when it is changed to a better purpose. I neither seduced nor betrayed your innocence, but still I confirmed you in guilt. I cannot, I will not, attempt to justify it with delusive arguments, nor will I bid you change the tears of penitence to smiles of wantonness. Go — leave me for ever; and when you think upon Von Artaveld, remember, that he who shared your errors resigned you alone to HIM who called you to his bosom as a father would his wandering and misguided child. To-morrow, Bianca, if I fall in the field, give one tear to my memory. Farewell!"

Von Artaveld walked away from her, and, laying his hand upon his sword, he seemed preparing to leave the tent. "Stay," said Bianca,

"stay; we do not part yet. I have not yet told you all my purpose. There is one act of kindness I would yet do for you before we part for ever. It is but a small act, but still it may prove that I am not ungrateful to you. It may serve you, and I will not be denied my last request."

"What is it?" enquired Von Artaveld. "I shall be glad to receive any act of kindness at your hands, that I may remember it, and think I was not altogether disregarded by you."

"The poor Bianca is yet your page," she replied, endeavouring to smile through her tears. "To morrow, should the day be lost to your party, and you survive, — if you are taken prisoner, you, as a leader of the White Hoods, cannot hope for mercy from your enemies: I have thought of a chance to save you; and, knowing that my plan must be executed by some one who is faithful, I will trust it to no one but myself."

"Tell me what it is," said Philip, "and should it appear practicable, I will not refuse to accept an act of kindness from your hands,

since I know that it will afford you comfort in the remembrance that you have served me at my hour of need; and if I should fail, I would not fall, like a common felon, by the hand of my enemy."

"Do you recollect," said Bianca, "the noble animal you once gave me in the day of my pride? Do you remember that even the gay Duke of Britanny, when he tarried in Ghent, sought to become its purchaser; but you gave it to Bianca?"

"I remember it well," replied Philip; "there was not such another horse in Flanders. I loved to see you nobly mounted, as you rode by my side to the chace."

"It bore me to-day to the camp," said Bianca; "and to-morrow, ere the onset begins, I have resolved to take my station near that little grove of trees on the summit of *Mont d'Or*. There will I hold this horse, ready caparisoned, so that should you be routed in the field, you may mount, and fly before you can be overtaken by your enemies; for I know you are to lead on your people on foot. My plan, it is true, may

fail; but at least it will give you a chance for escape, which you might not hope to find, unless by means of a page as true and faithful as Bianca."

Von Artaveld was sensibly affected at this proof of kindness and gratitude on the part of his penitent mistress; and he told her, that should necessity require his flight, if the day were lost, he would not fail, by her means, to avoid that fate which would otherwise fall upon him by the hand of a public executioner. Yet he hoped better things, and that he should be the victor, and not the fugitive, of the contest.

Bianca now conjured Von Artaveld to seek repose; but, greatly affected by the scene that had past, he said he was little disposed to sleep, and that he would leave the tent and seek Du Bois, to enforce an obedience of the orders he had given relative to the French king. Bianca conjured him to delay this purpose till the return of day, and pointed out to him the necessity there was that he should endeavour to seek rest, in order that he might be able to bear himself in full strength on the morrow. At length, in-

duced by the force of these arguments, and the desire he felt to do justice to his cause, Philip again threw himself upon his couch. Bianca once more placed herself near him to resume her watch, and remained silent.

For some time Von Artaveld lay in mute anxiety, pondering upon the late scene. It had affected his mind more than he could have wished at such a crisis. He endeavoured to divert his thoughts from the subject, and to consider what was the best to be done in the ensuing onset; till, worn out by the fatigues of the previous day, the exertions he had made in the march, and the accumulated anxieties of his mind, nature claimed her privilege, and he sunk at last into an uneasy sleep, where the images that had occupied his waking thoughts continued to haunt him with unquiet dreams.

Bianca sat motionless, lest she should disturb his rest, whilst her thoughts dwelt with melancholy presages on the future. The character of her mind was not one of an ordinary cast. Her feelings were strong and lively: they had been misdirected; but still a spark of better principles

had remained within her bosom, though apparently extinct whilst she was hurried on by the wild career of passion and revenge.

Few persons, however, are so wholly bad, but, at some period of their lives, conscience will speak to them the truth. Few are devoid of every germ of virtue; and happy is it for the guilty, when any circumstance or calamity, however painful, can awaken in the heart a sense of their condition. Such are moments of grace, offered by Providence to become the means of virtue. It is true these impressions are but too often transient; they are sometimes driven away, or banished, as busy intruders, amidst the pleasures of the world. But there are occasions when their effect becomes permanent, and is of more than ordinary power. Then they occupy the heart, and dwell upon the spirit, till they produce acts that sanctify penitence, and give, as it were, a sabbath to the soul, — a rest from the toil and vexations of passion. So was it with Bianca. The sickness that had threatened her life, the near view of death (which even the most hardened can seldom look upon without trem-

bling), had so alarmed her fears, that for the first time she felt the terrors of a guilty bosom. In this state of mind, the counsels of the holy monk had deeply impressed her, till at length Bianca became a sincere penitent; and, ever warm in her feelings, her enthusiasm was now directed to a proper object — the fear of God, and the desire to obtain his mercy.

Whilst Bianca watched the slumbers of Von Artaveld, she observed that his sleep gradually became more composed, and that at last it seemed profound, for he neither started nor uttered broken sentences, as he had done before. She looked upon him with an anxious gaze, and sighed as she thought how soon perhaps those noble features (which she now contemplated tranquil and composed in sleep) might be settled into the fixedness of death.

After a time she thought she heard some distant sounds of a strange and peculiar kind. She listened attentively, but all was again silent; and believing that her mind, fraught with melancholy thoughts, had assisted her fancy to conjure up ideal sounds during the deep still-

ness of the hour, she dismissed the subject from her mind, and thought no more of it, till again a low and peculiar sound was repeated, and distinctly met her ear. It seemed to come from a distance. Unwilling to disturb Von Artaveld, unless she was assured there was an absolute necessity for doing so, she arose, and glided softly towards the entrance of the tent. There she listened a moment, and again hearing the noise, she now resolved to look out, and if possible to ascertain what might be the cause.

Bianca therefore softly moved forward, quitted the tent, and advanced some paces in front of it. The night was very dark, for the clouds, that had hitherto been gathering into large masses, were now combined together, and hung, as it were, in one immense black curtain above the camp, totally veiling the face of Heaven, and concealing the moon, that was on the wane, and every star and planet of the night. The wind had dropt, not a leaf stirred, and a dead stillness reigned around, as if silence and darkness held their awful watch as the guardian spirits of the midnight hour.

Bianca, looked towards Mont d'Or; for thence the sounds seemed to come, as if from beyond the little eminence where the allied armies were encamped. She saw distinctly sparks of fire rising high and flashing in the air; now all was dark — anon they again arose, with a brilliancy that was painful to the sight. "That light," thus murmured Bianca, "must arise from the watch fires of the enemy; but Heavens! what sounds are these?" The wind, which had slept, in a moment arose, and sweeping with violence towards the spot where she stood before the tent, conveyed in its passage a combination of peculiar sounds, such as may be supposed to startle the ear of the dying on the field of battle. * The clink of arms, the measured stroke of swords, the heavy fall of the axe, the jarring thrust of the lance, all seemingly were heard as in dire confusion together; whilst the snortings and neighings of the war horse, the trampling of hoofs, and the shouts of the *melée*, mingled with

* This supernatural occurrence is particularly noticed by the historians of the time.

the shouts of "Montmorenci!" "D'Anghien!" "Von Artaveld!" and other war cries, that accompanied the heavy groans of the dying, or of the wounded on the field.

Bianca, greatly terrified, and feeling assured that the sounds came from *Mont d'Or*, resolved to awaken Von Artaveld. She was turning towards the tent in order to do so, when a shadowy form caught her eye, and, overpowered by terror and surprise, she stood, for a moment, mute and motionless. It hastily advanced, stretched forth a hand, and caught Bianca by the arm. Overcome with superstitious fears, she had neither the power to offer resistance, or even to call for help.

"Stay," said the person, "stay! you pass not into yon tent, till you have listened to the words of Ursula."

"Unhand me, woman," cried Bianca, who now recovered some degree of courage, upon finding who it was that thus addressed her. "Let me pass into yonder tent, that I may awaken the leader of our people, for the enemy

are advancing upon him from *Mont d'Or*. Do you not hear those dreadful sounds, and those war cries in wild confusion?"

Ursula laughed. "Those sounds," she said, "are nothing earthly. They neither issue from mortal lips, nor are they for mortal ears. Look to *Mont d'Or*," continued the hag, as she stretched forth her staff; "see you those fires that rise in mockery of darkness — those lights before which the moon has veiled her paler lustre; for, fearful to behold fires that are of the spirits of the fathomless abyss, she shrouds even her attendant stars, and hides her own head in the depths of the mountain clouds and vapours. Hear me, whilst I pour into thy ears words that shall glad thy heart; for I know it is savage as my own, and will rejoice to learn the tidings of a prophecy of evil."

"Let me go," said Bianca, still struggling to free her arm from Ursula's grasp.

"List but a moment in silence, and you shall pass," replied the hag. "Those direful sounds are but prophetic of the morrow, when the proud head shall be laid low, and nobles bite the dust,

and those who this night held their banquet at the festal board shall themselves become a banquet for the earth-worm, and a bait for the carrion bird that feasts upon the carcase of the dead. Those sounds are the triumph of the fiends. Hell rejoices upon that very spot where its richest harvest must be reaped. To-morrow shall the battle be on *Mont d'Or;* to-morrow shall *Mont d'Or* make wives put on the weeds of the lone widow, whilst babes even yet unborn shall learn, when they can but lisp the word, to name *Mont d'Or* as the grave of their fathers. *One* shall perish who is much to thee, Bianca; and thou shalt not live to hang a garland on his tomb. Thou shalt die as thou hast lived — a mark for fiends."

"Wicked prophetess!" said Bianca. "Miserable woman! thy tongue, that croaks like the night-bird, the omen of all evil — thy tongue now speaks foul and false. I am no longer thy disciple, and no longer the mark for either fiends or thee. I am devoted to Heaven."

Ursula laughed again. "To Heaven!" she said. "*You* devoted to Heaven! Do not cheat

yourself with the word. As well could the black night, that hangs in solemn darkness in the air, become at this hour bright and cheerful as the day, as you could change at once from sin to sanctity. You are condemned; your name is written down in that book whose characters are fixed in blood. You are marked as the daughter of infamy in this world, and of misery in the next. You may scorn me, but you cannot escape my doom. Remember it is Ursula who bids you to look on your last hour — to despair and die."

Thus saying, the wicked woman (whose mind, devoted to evil and superstition, was strongly tinctured with insanity,) broke from Bianca, and left her, as she had joined her, apparently without any purpose, unless it could be that of inflicting terror by her dreadful prophecy.

Bianca had trembled as she listened to her; and in spite of her late determination to fear nothing but Heaven, she shuddered at the recollection of a prophecy so fraught with misery. She feared Ursula, whilst she detested her; and, in a state of the utmost perturbation of mind,

hastened back to the tent, and instantly awakened Von Artaveld. "Arise Philip! awake Von Artaveld!" said Bianca. "Arise, and arm yourself. Your enemies, I fear, are pouring down upon you. For God's sake arise, and listen to the strange sounds that come from *Mont d'Or*."

Philip instantly started up, and went to the entrance of the tent, where the sounds that had before so affrighted Bianca at once burst upon his ear. "We are betrayed," said Von Artaveld. "Where is the watch? Why have the guard neglected to send scouts towards *Mont d'Or?* I must arm. We will advance to meet our enemy. Call up the herald, Bianca, who sleeps in the next tent; bid him instantly sound my trumpet, whilst I dispatch some one to reconnoitre."

Von Artaveld was about to leave the tent, when one of the guard appeared at the entrance of it, who looked pale with fear. "Tell your errand instantly," said Von Artaveld. "What has chanced?"

"Noble Von Artaveld," said the man, "Peter du Bois, the captain of the guard, hear-

ing a strange noise that came from *Mont d'Or*, sent me and some of my fellows to reconnoitre there. We followed in the direction of the sounds, but, to our alarm and astonishment, when we came to the place not a creature was to be found. We have examined the whole of *Mont d'Or*, and there was not a living thing upon it save ourselves."

"Fools!" said Von Artaveld, "you have played the part of cowards, and dared not venture on the other side the hill for fear of the enemy. There must be some trick in this. I fear we are betrayed, for such sounds are of this earth, or I am much in error. Bid my trumpet speak."

The loud and thrilling blast of the trumpet sent forth its sounds throughout the camp. The sleepers started, and, awakened by the sound, they hastily arose and seized their arms, nothing doubting but that the enemy was upon them. The chief officers and leaders of the White Hoods now hastened towards Von Artaveld, to learn what was the cause of his summons, for they knew his trumpet. He speedily made them

acquainted with the cause; and his account was confirmed by a renewal of those extraordinary sounds he had just described.

"There must be something in this of more than ordinary consequence," said Von Artaveld. "Follow me; I will station my own battalion on *Mont d'Or*, and there, if necessary, we shall be ready to meet our foes. When the men-at-arms are formed into a body, give the word to advance to *Mont d'Or*."

"Oh, not to *Mont d'Or*; go not to *Mont d'Or*," said Bianca, as she threw herself upon the arm of Von Artaveld. "I conjure you do not *there* seek to meet your enemies. Go anywhere, but not to *Mont d'Or*."

In vain did Bianca endeavour to persuade Von Artaveld to relinquish his purpose: finding it useless, she gave over the attempt, and ordering her horse to be in readiness, which she had resolved to hold prepared for Von Artaveld, to help his escape, should it be necessary, she determined to quit the tent early in the morning, and to take her station on the hill. Yet, in spite of her newly-acquired trust in Heaven, and her

better feelings, she trembled when she recollected the words of Ursula, and knew, at the same time, Von Artaveld was resolved to combat on *Mont d'Or*.

CHAP. IX.

Having in our last chapter described the manner in which the insurgents passed the night previous to the battle, it now remains that we should say something of the King of France and his allies. The most active measures had been adopted by the gallant constable for the ensuing conflict, and every thing was prepared for the morrow. The monarch was himself to take the field, but, on account of his extreme youth, it had been agreed by his council that he should be stationed where there was little danger, and surrounded by a battalion of chosen knights and men-at-arms.

Upon this memorable night Charles entertained, at a solemn supper, his uncles, the Earl of Flanders, Sir Walter d'Anghien, and the most noble of his followers. The royal banquet was prepared within his own tent, in a style of magnificence that could scarcely have been ex-

pected, considering the circumstances of the time. The young King, seated at the head of the board, his spirits elevated by the novelty of the scene, by the chivalrous discourse of the valiant men about him, displayed, in an unusual degree, a cheerfulness and enthusiasm that did honour to the cause in which he was engaged, and was far beyond his years. He questioned his uncles and De Clisson as to their plans, and entered into them with the utmost vivacity and interest.

Even the Earl of Flanders, who had hitherto been neglected, and was made but as secondary in his own cause, was this night unusually honoured, since he was appointed to command the guard of the King's battalion, and had under his controul seven hundred knights and twelve hundred men-at-arms. The courtesy and spirit with which Charles entertained his company diffused a general feeling of delight; all were cheerful, all exhilarated, and, sanguine in their hopes of the morrow, they already enjoyed, by anticipation, the glories of their triumph. Towards the conclusion of the banquet, the King

with his own hand filled a goblet of wine, and extending it, exclaimed, as he rose from his seat, "Pledge me, my gallant friends; and let this cup be drunk to our success in arms. May God and St. Denis grant us the victory."

In a moment all had arisen from their seats; the wine flowed, and the goblets sparkled, and every voice answered to the royal pledge in loud and reiterated acclamations. But there was one person present who seemed not to partake of "the general joy;" one who sighed as he returned the cup, which in courtesy he had tasted to answer the King's pledge. This person was no other than the honest burgomaster, Sir Simon de Bête, who, though still a prisoner on his parole of honour, (which he never attempted to break,) was this night invited by the young King to partake of the supper. The simplicity and eccentricities of Sir Simon had afforded a great fund of amusement to the young knights and gay courtiers about the King, so that, like a royal jester, he was looked upon by them more as a subject to afford fair game for the chace of their wit, than as a prisoner of

state of any consequence. Accordingly Sir Simon was invited to every courtly merry-making, in the same way that, in modern times, some unlucky wight, who possesses a fund of laughter, (or what is just as good, a fund for being laughed at,) is invited for the express entertainment of a great man and his friends, being considered an indispensable addition to the amusements proposed for the party.

But whatever mirth the simplicity or the eccentricities of Sir Simon had hitherto afforded, on the present occasion the courtiers were disappointed, since Sir Simon appeared so melancholy at heart, and looked so "woe begone," that he neither jested himself, nor offered a fair scope for the jests of others. Charles, (like boys of his age, following the example of his companions, and sometimes of those who were men in years, but boys in manners,) who had often made Sir Simon a subject of his mirth, still respected him. The natural kindness of the King's disposition, and the pain he himself felt at giving pain to others, always held his youthful spirits in check, so that although he jested now

and then with the little goldsmith, he never followed it up when the jest approached to ridicule, or extended beyond the line of good nature; and the honest frankness of the worthy magistrate of Ghent, so different from the manners of the courtiers, really pleased the prince, as well by its novelty as its sincerity. Charles, therefore, truly regarded Sir Simon, and entertained a wish, he had not yet communicated to any person, to detain the honest man in some situation at his court. He observed this night the dejection of his prisoner, and the manner in which Sir Simon had returned the cup to the board did not escape his notice. The young King turned towards him, and smiling good humouredly, he said, "Why, how is this, worthy knight? You partake of our cheer as if the wine was filled to a funeral cup, and not to the pledge of joy. We respect you for your honesty and worth, and also for the honourable manner in which you have kept your faith and plighted word. Sir Simon, we would offer to you a proposal for your own advantage, as a mark of our especial love."

Sir Simon bowed, thanked the King, but did not look a whit the more cheerful. Charles continued — "Though you came hither as a partisan of those men of Ghent, we are assured that you neither partake of their violence, nor of their selfish and vindictive spirit. Leave, then, for ever, the cause of those unworthy citizens, and accept a command under us, which we will this night bestow upon you, as one of our own captains and most honoured knights."

At hearing this proposal, which many present considered merely as some new jest upon Sir Simon, the courtiers began to titter, and to wink at each other, waiting some answer from the knight that would divert them. Sir Simon, who saw well enough what was expected, took no notice of them; perhaps he felt too much at this moment to express any indignation at a light or idle jest, and, turning to the King, he only said as follows.

"I thank your young majesty, for your good-will; and I owe you much for the way in which you have treated me, since I have been as a

prisoner of honour. But for your grace, I might have broken my heart within the walls of a prison, which would have been a sore disgrace to Ghent, and indeed to all Flanders; seeing that one, who for more than twenty years acted as chief burgomaster, to say nothing of master of the goldsmiths' company, and other honourable stations, ought not to lie in a dungeon, like the lowest and the basest of men. You have been kind to me, dear young King; and could I do you a service as an honest man, I would shew you, that Sir Simon de Bête would never disgrace his knighthood by ingratitude. But to enlist under your King's majesty's banner, when you bear it against my native city, to drink cups with cheerfulness that are pledged to overwhelm her in ruin, these are things I can never do; and if those young knights and squires that stand yonder, titter to hear an old man talk thus, or to see him decline the offer of a King when it would make him a traitor, I would tell them, that they may laugh if they will; but that their scorn can never half so much injure me in the eyes of others as my

heart would render me contemptible in my own, could I betray my native city. No, your grace, I loved Ghent, I upheld her franchises; I did it for the sake of public justice, and for no private enmity to my Lord of Flanders. I became, from this motive, what you are pleased to call a traitor; but I will not prove myself such, by voluntarily forsaking a just cause. If I have done wrong, God forgive the error, since it is one of the head, not of the heart."

At hearing this, no one seemed disposed to smile; and the Duke of Burgundy, said, "This man is bold, your grace, in declaring his rebellious feelings. Would it not be well, since he has declined the honourable proposal you have been pleased to make to him, that he should be held a close prisoner till the battle is over. He may escape in the general confusion, and bear important intelligence of your state and strength to the enemy."

Charles heard this proposal of the Duke of Burgundy, but did not reply to it; and turning to Sir Simon, he said, "Suppose, knight, that instead of following our uncle of Burgundy's

advice, since you decline to accept our proposal, we should send you back free to your own people who are in arms for Ghent, how would you act? Would you do as our uncle tells us we ought to fear you might?"

"Truly," said Sir Simon, "your grace puts questions to me, that might tempt a better man to beguile your majesty with false words. But evil be to him who would mislead youth, and early teach a king the vice of suspicion. I will speak honestly. If you are a wise young prince, as you are a kind young prince, you will not let me go; for once at liberty, and a free man, I should do all I could to benefit Ghent, and to save the lives of her citizens."

"Nay, then," said Charles, "we must not act too hastily; but how will you behave, should you remain with us in this eventful moment, the same as you now are, a prisoner of honour?"

"In that case," said Sir Simon, "if I remain as I am, a prisoner on my word of honour, I must shew myself worthy the indulgence by being neuter, and neither interfere to betray my own cause,

nor become a spy and a tale bearer to injure that of your majesty, or of your grace's cousin the Earl of Flanders, to whom I wish no ill, only that he would give us back our franchises."

"Spoken like an honest man," replied the young King; "and on the faith of a prince, should we gain the cause to-morrow in the field, and Ghent becomes subject to *our* rule, one of her ancient magistrates at least shall *not* be numbered amongst traitors. Once more, Sir Simon, you shall hold an honourable post in your native city."

Sir Simon bowed, but spoke no thanks for this promise, since the idea of holding any station in Ghent, however honourable, *under the rule of France*, was a thing not at all congenial to the patriotic spirit of the worthy goldsmith. But though Sir Simon forbore to return thanks for what he could never consider an obligation, he presumed to solicit the King's attention to a boon, which he expressed his anxiety to obtain.

"Speak it," said Charles, in the most gracious manner; "and if it be within our power

to grant, in safety to our state and cause, you shall have no reason to tax us with the want of a cheerful compliance."

"My gracious prince," replied Sir Simon, "the boon that I would now ask does not personally affect myself, saving in as much as it lies near my heart; for what I would ask touches a damsel beautiful as day, and good as she is beautiful."

The King smiled, when he heard Sir Simon, a man whose person and years were neither of them likely to make him a squire of dames, thus declare his heart to be concerned in favour of a beautiful damsel. "This is an extraordinary request indeed," said Charles; "and we would fain know what fair maid within our camp, for we conclude her to be near at hand, can thus occasion one so grave and prudent as Sir Simon de Bête to make a request in her behalf."

"Your grace will be pleased to hear me before you judge my motive," said Sir Simon; "I did not know till this day that the damsel in question was in the camp. By chance

I learnt that she was here under the protection of the most noble Earl of Flanders, and his gallant nephew."

The Earl and Sir Walter here exchanged looks. They felt internally vexed that Sir Simon should thus publicly allude to Anna, whose presence they had carefully concealed, and who was now in company with some few of her own sex, that had followed their husbands to the camp; but upon the eve of this eventful battle were to be placed, if possible, within some neighbouring fortress for security, or, if no such refuge could be found, must be stationed in the rear of the army with the baggage.

"This is most extraordinary," said the King, "that you, Sir Simon, who are a prisoner, should make us a request in favour of a damsel now under the care of our cousin the Earl of Flanders. It is true we had heard that a noble orphan, to whom Lewis is guardian, bears him company, and, in compliance with what we understood to be her wishes, we have hitherto suffered her to live in all privacy. What can she,

then, be to you, that you should interfere with my lord's charge ?"

"She is to me," answered Sir Simon, "even as the child of my own bosom; and, craving pardon of my lord of Flanders, I am her natural guardian, since she was committed to my charge by her dying father. How she came into my lord's hands, I do not know; but I doubt not she is in honourable protection, at least for the present."

"Wherefore, then," said Charles, "should you interfere? Surely there is some mystery in this, and what is it you would ask?"

"May it please your grace," said Sir Simon, "I am a childless man; but yet I think I can tell, by what I feel for this maiden, the anxious thoughts of a father for his child; and that when a dying one gives up his daughter to a guardian, it is in the view that he should look to her honour, and her safety, in all emergencies, and seek to help her through all perils. This I did as long as my situation of chief magistrate of the city of Ghent enabled me to protect the

damsel; but she was torn from me by the villainy, I grieve to say it, of one of our own party. Thank God she is now in better hands; all I would ask, therefore, is, that her safety, till the event of the battle is past, may be considered by your majesty."

The Earl of Flanders, thus hearing his charge of Anna so publicly alluded to, thought it no longer necessary that he should keep silence on the subject, and addressing the King, he said, "The maiden who, I acknowledge to your grace, was once under the guardianship of Sir Simon de Bête, is now under mine as Earl of Flanders, the legal protector of all orphans born within my dominions. She is in perfect safety."

"Aye, as you think, my lord," said Sir Simon; "but a camp is no place of safety for her; though I grant, if the day goes well with you, she may be safe. But should the men of Ghent prevail, the very circumstance of her having been under your charge will hardly better her condition. I would, therefore, humbly request your grace's majesty

to grant my boon, which is, that a guard may be appointed to attend this damsel to the convent of St. Magdalen, about a league and a half from this place. The abbess of the house is of my own blood, and, let the day go which way it will, the damsel, for whose welfare I am so concerned, will be in safety. I am sure my proposal is a good one; and, with your majesty's leave, I will warrant that Sir Walter d'Anghien would gladly undertake to be her escort."

Sir Walter, who really thought the plan desirable, as it afforded the hope of placing Anna in safety till the battle was over, warmly seconded the proposal, and begged to become captain of the guard to escort the damsel to the convent of St. Magdalen. Some one present suggested, that as the convent was situated near a part of the country now in possession of the enemy, there might, perhaps, be danger in attempting to convey her thither; but this objection was overruled, especially as a small guard could, under favour of the night, quietly conduct her, before any of the opposite party should be stir-

ring from their quarters. The young King granted permission; and Sir Simon, having gained leave to visit the maiden before her departure from the camp, he instantly left the King's presence, and went with Sir Walter d'Anghien, in order to bid her farewell.

We shall not here attempt to describe the brief, but affectionate, interview that took place between Sir Simon and Anna. She was rejoiced, indeed, once more to behold her dearest friend. In the meantime Sir Walter collected together a few, but brave, men, lest a larger party should excite the notice of the enemy. Anna begged Sir Simon's blessing as she would that of a father, and kissed his hand as the worthy man shed tears over her, and clasped her to his bosom. After a few tender adieus, which Sir Walter contrived to whisper in her ear, Anna suffered him to lead her to the litter, in which she had travelled since the Earl had joined the French in their march, and, in a short time, the little party bade farewell to Sir Simon, and moved forward by a circuitous road in the direction of the convent of St. Magdalen, where we

shall for the present leave them to pursue their way, whilst we return to the pavilion of the King of France.

Soon after Sir Walter d'Anghien had quitted it, the discourse turned on the subject of the expected conflict on the morrow, the measures to be put in practice, the station of the various battalions, and all other things necessary to "the pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war." The King, agreeably to the instructions that he had in *private* received from his uncles (particularly his uncle of Burgundy), now turned towards Sir Oliver de Clisson, and, taking the hand of the veteran soldier, he said, "Constable, we have a request to make of you which you shall not deny us?"

"Your grace may be tolerably sure of my assent," replied De Clisson, bluntly, "since the requests of princes generally imply commands."

"But ours *is* a request, and not a command," continued Charles. "We would that, for the morrow, you should replace in our hands your office of constable, which, for the day, we will bestow on my young lord De Montmorenci,

whilst you, dear Sir Oliver, remain near our own person." Charles spoke this request in a hesitating voice, more like a schoolboy reciting a set task than as a free demand, arising from his own judgment or feelings.

De Clisson, perfectly well acquainted with the young King's manner, and alive to the intrigues of the court, in a moment suspected the truth, that Charles had been tutored to make this request at the instigation of others. He saw that the Duke of Burgundy (jealous of his influence, as constable, over the prince's mind, and equally so of his popularity with the French people,) felt desirous to remove him at so important a crisis from the honourable post he had hitherto held. Possessing the full benefit of De Clisson's plans and counsels, Burgundy, it was true, upon the very eve of their being put in practice, had urged the King (under the plea of detaining Sir Oliver near his own person) to induce him to resign his constableship — a thing that must deprive him of the honour and merit due to the leader of the conflict. De Clisson, therefore, turned immediately towards Bur-

gundy, and, as he faced him, darted upon the Duke one of those fierce and expressive looks which he was wont to glance upon his enemies from the only remaining organ of his sight.

"Is it the Duke, or the King, that I must answer?" said Sir Oliver, in a voice of mingled scorn and irony.

"It is I who make the request," said Charles; for he feared being schooled by his uncle in private, should he declare in public that such had already been the case.

"Your grace is a boy," replied the constable, hastily; "but your royal father, who placed me in my office on the death of Du Guesclin, gave it me, not as a toy to play with in peace, but as a thing to bear the buffets of war. Look upon me, Charles, and as you bear your royal father's name and crown, and hold his sceptre, so likewise bear his noble spirit; act by justice, and not by the party-rule of others."

"Nay," said the young King, "we thought it but a wise counsel to have you near our own person the first time we are to look upon a real

field of arms, where men play for victory, and the stake to be drawn is life."

"Yes, my prince," said De Clisson, "and where the forfeit to be paid is honour. If your grace were to be placed in actual danger, I would be the first and the last to stand by your side. But do not, I conjure you, thus put your own and your father's most faithful servant to so much shame as to deprive him of that post where his honour and his danger are allied. For your own sake do not do it. The vanguard have followed Oliver de Clisson through many a day of trouble, of hard blows, and of death. Should he now leave them, should his banner droop in the rear, when it should float above their iron heads in front of the battle, they will become dispirited, and their ranks may be easily broken. Do not, I beseech you, do not ask the constable to change his office even for a day."

Charles was considerably moved; he hesitated, when the Duke of Burgundy fixed upon him one of those stern and speaking looks that sometimes overawe a young mind used to their controul, even as mad people are said to be ruled by the

look of their keepers. Charles turned aside his head, for he feared to meet the looks of his uncle, and was pained by beholding those of Sir Oliver, and said, in a low voice, to the latter, "Constable, we will have it so."

De Clisson, deeply wounded, and no longer master of his own feelings, threw himself at the King's feet, and, taking his hand, as the tears burst into his eyes, exclaimed, "Oh, Charles, my prince! for your father's sake, if not for mine, do not thus disgrace a brave man, who has spent his life in the service of his sovereign; or if I must resign, complete my ruin at once. Take my office, but not for a day only — take it for ever; and the shame that covers my old head with sorrow shall help me to the grave faster than those years that have already made it grey."

Charles, whose feelings were at all times alive to the pain he inflicted upon others, was wholly unequal to bear this appeal. He stood overwhelmed with grief and surprise, as the stout, the bold, the veteran De Clisson held his hand, and dropt tears upon it.

The grief of females, or of children, of soft and tender minds, may sensibly affect us. But when we see tears on a manly cheek, when a spirit (that rises above ordinary minds, like the lordly oak amidst the forest,) is bent with sorrow, even till it no longer can repress the bitter drops of anguish, there is something so powerful, so heart-moving, in the sight, that it harrows rather than softens our feelings; and our sympathies become oppressive and intensely painful. It was thus Charles felt at beholding the grief of the hardy and valiant constable. He thought no more of his uncle's chiding than if he had not been present; and, raising Sir Oliver from the ground, exclaimed, as he threw himself into his embrace, "Be as you have ever been — still the dearest friend, and the constable of France. Think no more of this. Do as you list; you shall have your own way; and your will shall be ours."

De Clisson returned heartily the young King's embrace; and, overcome by the mingled emotions of grief, joy, and love to his young prince, exclaimed, as he wrung his hand, "God

bless you! St. Denis be praised! You are a worthy boy — worthy of your great father."

The Duke of Burgundy, who saw the matter thus decided, and knew that it would be useless now to interfere, assumed a look the most unconcerned in the world, and walked a little aside; but as he did so, he bit his lip, internally cursing De Clisson, and vowing hereafter to pay off on Sir Oliver the new score which he, the Duke, had placed to the account of jealousy, with something in addition, by way of interest, for the delay in the discharge of the debt. The courtiers, who saw the King was pleased, and could not so easily read the Duke's mind, unanimously chimed into the same tune with their royal master, and the pavilion rang with the concord of their voices, which sang to the strain that the constable could not do better than keep his old place in the van of to-morrow, and that he was the fittest person to fill that office in the field.

Harmony being once more restored, again the King led the discourse as to the measures that should be taken upon the opening of the battle. "There is one thing, my lords," said Charles,

"that weighs upon our mind, and on which we would gladly consult you. Our brave knight, Sir Peter de Villiers, bears the oriflamme in this expedition: now as the oriflamme is a sacred banner, hitherto only displayed on the part of France when her men-at-arms march against infidels, it goes against our conscience that this sacred emblem of our faith, as soldiers of Christ, should be unfurled to lead us on against these unhappy rebels, who, although they be traitors and wicked people, have yet known the baptism of God."

The young King devoutly made the sign of the cross upon his bosom, and looked at Sir Oliver, as if expecting to hear his opinion. "I have been in many battles," said Sir Oliver, "where the late King, your father, led in person; for the oriflamme is never borne unless the King is present; but I never yet saw it displayed where the foe were other than unbaptised pagans, and heathen infidels. Against Flanders, it cannot in justice be unfurled."

Several of the courtiers, who appeared to listen with deep attention to this discourse, now bent

their heads, accompanying the action with a sort of half shake of them, that implied assentation; and some even ventured to utter the words "very true"—"very just"—"the Ghent men are rebels, but still baptised Christians," &c. &c.

The Duke of Burgundy, who was glad, perhaps, to find an opportunity to wreak some little spite by contradicting De Clisson, now boldly gave his opinion on the opposite side, by saying, "It is true, as the noble constable has stated, that the oriflamme of France cannot, and ought not to be borne against Christians. But be it remembered that these Flemings are enemies to the true pope Clement of Avignon, and openly acknowledge the false pontiff Urban of Rome. By doing so they are guilty of heresy; and, as heretics, they can no longer be considered Christians. The oriflamme, therefore, with all justice, may be unfurled against them."

De Clisson, who was more of a soldier than a theologian, had no arguments to offer against this nice distinction made by the Duke of Burgundy, so perfectly in character with the precepts set forth by the pope Clement himself; for his

holiness had publicly pronounced all the followers and believers in Christ to be *infidels*, unless they also acknowledged *himself* as the true deputy of Heaven and St. Peter upon earth. For the crime of unbelief in him, the Flemings had been excommunicated by Clement; who, then, should dare to consider them as Christians!

Sir Oliver was silent, and the young King had nothing to say against the authority of his holiness of Avignon. The courtiers, therefore, once more shook their heads, but at present on the opposite side, for they now bent them towards the Duke of Burgundy; and again remarking it was "very true," "Clement was a pope, and Urban was no pope, therefore Urbanists could be no Christians." Bearing the oriflamme against those of Flanders was finally settled as a lawful and just privilege, without farther debate.

"And now, dear lords," said the King, "let each of you retire to his tent for the night — let each endeavour to take repose, that he may the better be enabled to bear the fatigues of to-morrow, when, I doubt not, God and St. Denis

will bless our arms with victory. To-morrow, as soon as it shall be the dawn of day, we will hear a solemn mass; and we would beg your attendance, that we may conquer or die as it becomes Christians, within the bosom of the church. Good-night, Sir Oliver, and may we again sup to-morrow in company, rejoicing together as the victors of Rosebecque; a thing we doubt not, since our constable and our brave nobles take the field. My Lord de Montmorenci, and you my Lord de St. Py, a word in your ear."

Both the young noblemen were instantly at the King's side. "We would beg of you," continued Charles, "to stay with us in our tent till all this good company shall have departed, since we have something of importance to speak to you upon." Both the knights bowed assent.

The company dispersed, when the matter of importance upon which the boy King wished to consult his two young and favourite companions, proved to be nothing more nor less (we are sorry to disappoint the reader, but so it was,) than *which* of his *two* new and brilliant suits of armour he should determine to wear for the first

time on the morrow. Both were so handsome that the King could not positively tell which to choose; and, after trying on first the one and then the other, and walking up and down, and looking at himself again and again in the mirror that was placed up for that purpose in his tent, it finally required the united consideration and opinions of both the young lords above named to determine him which to choose, and after all he went to bed still doubtful. And, as truth obliges us to be a faithful narrator, we are afraid that we must say, the King at last fell asleep whilst holding the important debate in his own mind, not concerning the rights of the Earl of Flanders, the intrigues of his uncles, the manly feelings of De Clisson, nor the victory of the morrow, but whether, of the Milan or the Bourdeaux suit of mail, the one was handsomer than the other.

We hope the reader will pardon this; for be it remembered, a boy may be a king, but a boy will always feel as a boy, and Charles was but sixteen years old.

CHAP. X.

The order of our narrative obliges us to return to the fair Anna and her gallant lover Sir Walter d'Anghien, who, under colour of the night, were journeying from the camp of the allied armies to the convent of St. Magdalen. Sir Walter, who had felt considerable anxiety at the thought of what might happen to her should he fall in the conflict of the morrow, had gladly assented to the proposal of Sir Simon de Bête; and though there might be some danger in conveying Anna from the camp towards a convent, situated near that part of the country occupied by the enemy, still of two evils he deemed it the least; certain that the sanctuary of St. Magdalen would be respected, since the abbess was the widow of a distinguished citizen of Ghent.

With the utmost silence and caution, Sir Walter and his few attendants now rode by the

side of the litter in which Anna was placed. Neither the fair orphan nor her conductor had exchanged a word since they quitted the camp, but their thoughts were fondly employed upon each other. Sir Walter remembered how long he had loved, how often he had been parted from her; and he also remembered how often she had been restored to him, when he feared she was lost for ever. Hope, that friend of the child of sorrow, who lingers near when all friends else forsake him, who gilds with sunshine the distant prospect that fancy offers to a lover's mind, and changes darkness to light, who sees in every object a colour not its own — hope still cheered his bosom, and played about his path. Under her guidance, therefore, he now attempted to decipher the pages of futurity; and there he read of services to come, of services that he might render to the Earl of Flanders, who, as some requital, and in payment of the debt of gratitude that he owed to the orphan herself, would at length consent to give them happiness in each other.

Such were the busy anticipations that occu-

pied the mind of the young knight; those of his Anna were of a less cheerful character. The uncertainty of war, the probable danger and its consequences, to which D'Anghien must be exposed, her long and continued sorrows, made her almost weary of hope; for hope had too often played with Anna's feelings, like a worldly cheat, to lull her into security, in order the more easily to render her the dupe of false expectations. She remembered, too, with mingled shame and sorrow, that this unnatural and civil war had been, in the first instance, commenced by her father; the quarrels of John Lyon and his rival for power, Gilbert Matthew, had paved the way for misery and bloodshed. Small beginnings have often powerful endings. Like a stream that wells out from some insignificant and lowly rock, till it glides on, and at length spreads itself into a broad and deep expanse of turbulent waters — like this had been the unhappy course of her father's private feuds. And the dejection of her spirits at this moment, suggested to her melancholy thoughts the idea that she might, perhaps, as the object of retributive

justice for the crimes of her parent, become the victim of their consequences; since the sorrows of the sins of the fathers too often fall upon the children; an effect that, in his commandments, is wisely pointed out by God himself, as an additional motive to induce us to keep within the line of moral obligation.

Anna thought, too, of her father's death; and shuddered as she recollected that the fatal cup which had suddenly snatched him from life, even in the midst of his guilty and rebellious career, had been administered to him by the hand of his enemy, Gilbert Matthew; that very Gilbert who had once dared to solicit her to become his wife. Such were the sad thoughts of Anna. One followed quickly the other in fearful restrospection, till her reverie was at length disturbed by her observing that the litter in which she was conveyed had been stopt for a moment, whilst Sir Walter, and the varlet who acted as guide, were holding a debate in a low voice.

Anna now ventured to draw aside the curtain, and to look out, with the intent to enquire

what might interrupt their progress. The night was dark, for, as we have before noticed, the moon, that was on the wane, was frequently wholly obscured by the thick clouds that drifted before the wind. Ere Anna could enquire as to what had chanced to occasion the stoppage of the litter, Sir Walter d'Anghien sprang forward, and hastily bade some one, who was advancing, " Stop, at the peril of his life."

The person addressed (who was alone and on horseback) seemed instantly to recognise the voice of D'Anghien; since he said, " Sir Walter d'Anghien do not fear me, I am a friend. I go to seek your uncle the Earl of Flanders. I bring him important news, the subject of which I must communicate to no one save himself. Let me pass, then, I pray you, and offer me no hindrance when I go to do my duty."

Anna involuntarily dropt the curtain that she held in her hand, and sunk back in the litter, shuddering to find that her ear had caught the accents of Gilbert Matthew. Her thoughts, but a moment before, had dwelt with terror upon his recollection, as the justly suspected

murderer of her father; and the sounds of his voice, so sudden, so unexpected, and at such a time, now seemed to her imagination harsh and discordant, and to come with as bad an augury of evil as the croak of the night-bird, that is said to be an ill omen to the sick or the dying.

Sir Walter d'Anghien had never liked Gilbert Matthew, for he hated his fawning manners and his cunning; but he knew him to have been appointed the deacon of the pilots by his uncle, and that he was also a favoured servant of the Countess of Artois. He knew likewise the nature of the intelligence Lewis de Male expected to learn from this man, and that it was necessary he should be apprized of it, before it became generally known at the court of France. Sir Walter, therefore, now drew Gilbert a little apart from the men who came with him, and said in a low voice, "Gilbert, I can guess the intelligence you bear to my uncle. The Countess of Artois is dead, is she not?"

"She is, indeed," replied Gilbert.

"And the manner of her death?" said Sir Walter.

"Was strange and inexplicable," rejoined Gilbert. "None of the leeches could tell of what sickness she departed. The Countess spoke little, but she pined, and — and made a fearful ending," continued Gilbert, in a lower voice; "for the priest who went to shrive her left her without doing his office. She would not heed him, and he looked blank with horror; but he said nothing. I can tell you no more now, for I must instantly seek the Earl; and I fear I have already lost the right road to the camp. I have been wandering about for the last two hours in the midst of darkness. Can you spare one of your people to put me into the right path? He shall return to you again; but my delay may be of the utmost consequence to my lord of Flanders, since, besides this intelligence, I bear letters to him from the governor of Artois."

"We have but one man who can act as a guide through this circuitous route," replied Sir Walter; "and we, too, are bent upon an important trust that demands both haste and caution. But we will move softly on awhile, and the

guide shall return with you as far as the cross roads on the heath, that we have just passed; then you cannot miss your way. There part with the man, and bid him ride back to join us again with all speed, since we cannot proceed without him."

"He shall do so," said Gilbert; "I will not delay you a moment more than needful. But you know the consequence of my intelligence to the Earl of Flanders."

Sir Walter knew it indeed, and felt greatly vexed that any necessity should arise at the present time to occasion the least delay in conducting Anna to the convent; but he dared not disoblige his uncle, by refusing to lend Gilbert Matthew the assistance of the guide for so short a space of time. Accordingly they set off together, whilst Sir Walter advanced to the side of the litter, and made Anna acquainted with the cause of this little delay in their journey.

Gilbert Matthew was one of those people who never let any thing pass without desiring to know all they can about it, whether it concerns

them or not. He was so artful and calculating in his nature, that he would often speculate upon the slightest circumstance, with a hope that in some way or other it might prove useful to himself; so that he never failed to gain what insight he could into any subject of secrecy or importance that fell within the scope of his observation.

He had observed the litter; but he did *not* know *who* was in it. Still he thought it must contain some one of consequence, since Sir Walter d'Anghien was the leader of the escort. And at such an hour of the night, to quit the camp upon the very eve of battle was most strange. "There must be something extraordinary in all this," thought Gilbert, "and I am determined to find it out." — With this resolution in his head, he no sooner was out of the hearing of Sir Walter's party, than he began to act upon it, and, under pretext of his horse being jaded with travel, he slackened his pace, and thus questioned the guide. "You have a dark night for travelling. You must know well the road that you are going, not to lose your way;

is it very far off? For if it is, you may chance to have the morning light, and the White Hoods upon you together."

"I know my road well enough," replied the guide; "but I do not know if I have Sir Walter's leave to talk about it."

"Certainly not, to strangers," said Gilbert; "for you saw when Sir Walter and I talked upon the subject, he drew me aside even from his own people; and I know well he told me of the importance of your charge in the litter yonder; you understand what I mean."

"Why, aye, it may be so," answered the guide, who, being somewhat simple, was the more easily duped by Gilbert Matthew. "The charge may be of importance to Sir Walter; but, for my own part, I think it not overwise to run one's head into danger for the sake of any damsel the night before a battle."

"So," (thought Gilbert,) "there is some mystery indeed in this, but I will find it out;" and turning to the man, he continued artfully to address him, saying, "aye, but for such a damsel as *she* is, it is a different thing, you know."

"I do not know that at all," answered the guide; "for my part, I should have thought the daughter of such an old traitor as John Lyon, for I know her well enough, an odd sort of damsel for Sir Walter or the Earl to look after. But St. Benedict bless them; great men will have their whims, so I say nothing."

"And I say nothing, and ask nothing too," replied Gilbert; "but this I say, that I must get my horse on a little faster, or it will be longer than I think before I gain the French camp, or you return back to guide your charge in the litter yonder, to — to — pshaw, I forget the name of the place — to — "

"To the convent of St. Magdalen," said the guide, filling up the blank occasioned by the affected lapse of memory in Gilbert Matthew. "Oh, aye, to the convent of St. Magdalen," said the deacon; "and now, my good fellow, here are three roads; which of them am I to take? for here you must leave me, and you must spare neither spur nor breath to ride back as fast as you can to Sir Walter. And here is an old crown to reward you for your trouble, and as

a proof of my respect for the prudence and caution which you have shewn in speaking of your master's affairs."

"Thanks, noble master deacon," said the guide; "look, do you see the plain yonder? now observe that fire that burns so bright, it is the watch fire of our camp; keep that in view, guide your horse in a straight line towards it, and you will be there in less than half an hour. But do *not* go towards the right hand, because *that* road leads in the direction of the camp of the enemy, near yonder hill, called Mont d'Or, and you might chance to fall in with their scouts, or with the outpost. — The beacon is your sure guide; and so a good night, and a safe ride to you, master deacon."

The guide turned his horse's head, and driving his spurs into his sides, set off to rejoin the party with the litter, and Gilbert Matthew continued the road as he had been directed. For some time he journeyed on without any interruption, and as he did so, his thoughts formed themselves into something like the following curious soliloquy.

"Let me think. — How stands the account? I have revenged myself on John Lyon. — I have fooled the Earl of Flanders into a trust and security that makes him think me his most faithful servant. — I tutored the Countess of Artois, in spite of her proud and insolent soul, to obey my suggestions, my will. — I have made even old Ursula useful to me, though she is the tool of the White Hoods, and of that accursed Peter du Bois. — I had planned to do the Earl such service, by intriguing to secure to him the possession of Artois, in right of his mother, *independent of the French*, that he must have rewarded me after my own will; and, for that reward, I had marked out, sooner or later, Anna should be my own. — Yes, Anna, that disdainful beauty, whose blood I once attempted to spill in requital of her scorn. But I have thought better of it; and I would now rather that she should satisfy my vengeance, by satisfying my passion. *This was* the fair side of the account. But now how stands it? Before my hopes are ripe, some accursed devil haunts the mind of the Countess of Artois, and she sickens, or, as

I suspect, she falls by one of those slow poisons she was so fond of administering to others. — Well, her death was rather too soon for me; my lady Countess should have lived till I had done with her at least, as the instrument of my preferment. Still all wears a fair face; when lo! I come, and before my plans are ripe, I find the dearest baffled — find, that the very woman I had sworn either to possess or to destroy, is already within the power of another, safe under the escort of Sir Walter d'Anghien, who is to bestow her, forsooth, within the walls of St. Magdalen. Let St. Magdalen look well to her charge; for if Gilbert Matthew's policy fails him not at such a crisis, he will take advantage of these blessed times, — times for wise men to profit by, and, with the first band of trusty varlets he can raise, St. Magdalen shall by force be rid of her charge, and the outrage will be laid to the account of the White Hoods. There will be another comfort in this sweet mode of vengeance, for it will annoy Anna's kindred by her disgrace; and thus shall Gilbert Matthew work *a full revenge on that accursed Du Bois.*"

The worthy deacon, who entertained himself by these thoughts and speculations, was so wholly absorbed by them, and the feelings of hatred and malignity by which they were accompanied, that he actually uttered the last sentence *aloud*, as he rode on somewhat more heedlessly than the place and the circumstances of the time could warrant. Whilst uttering this sentence, he passed some low and thick bushes near the road side; but, what was his astonishment, to hear his own vehement expressions of revenge against Du Bois answered by others equally vehement against himself. "Du Bois will avenge himself on thee, base wretch," exclaimed a voice, as the speaker suddenly arose from his lurking place amongst the bushes, and accompanied his reply with a furious blow, that at once hurled the deacon from his horse, and laid him and his plans to wallow in the dirt, of which alone they both were worthy.

Immediately Peter du Bois, and a band of stout fellows, well armed with their Flemish clubs, completely surrounded the deacon, as they sallied from behind the thick bushes, where they had

lain in ambush; not expecting, indeed, to fall in with Gilbert Matthew, for they looked to surprise a nobler game, but still he was a welcome prize. A spy of Du Bois had brought intelligence, that Sir Walter d'Anghien, and a small party, were leaving the camp on some secret expedition, and had taken the road to the left of *Mont d'Or*. On learning this, Du Bois had no longer heeded the extraordinary appearances of the hill, nor the sounds that had disturbed the camp, but hastened to lie in ambush, and to intercept the progress of his enemies. He arrived too late to surprise Sir Walter d'Anghien, who had already passed in safety; but Gilbert Matthew, the ancient enemy of Peter, the murderer of John Lyon, was a capture only second in value to that of Sir Walter himself.

Du Bois raised his sword to strike Gilbert dead on the instant; but, as if recollecting himself, he dropt his arm, and turning to one of his men, he said, "Secure the villain. He shall not die here; bear him in safety, as you value your lives, to the tent of Von Artaveld. We

may gain some intelligence from this dastard, of the utmost consequence to our cause. If he attempts to escape, or to cry out, knock out his brains on the instant."

The order was no sooner given than it was executed, and Gilbert Matthew, half stunned by the blow he had received in his fall, did not recover a full consciousness till he found himself in the tent of Von Artaveld, surrounded by Du Bois and his people. Peter now enquired for Von Artaveld, and learnt that he was already departed, with a body of men-at-arms, for *Mont d'Or*, in consequence of the disturbance occasioned by the extraordinary occurrence we have noticed in a former chapter.

Du Bois expressed his vexation that Von Artaveld was not present; but turning to Gilbert Matthew, he said, in a tone of hardened indifference, "I will take upon me to hang thee, wretch, without the concurrence of my fellow captain in arms. This night shall avenge the murder of John Lyon. But first the torture shall wring from thee whatever intelligence may profit us;" and, turning to a savage looking

fellow who stood near Du Bois, whispered in his ear. The man instantly left the tent, as if to obey his orders.

Bianca, who (at the time Du Bois had entered with Gilbert as his prisoner) was preparing herself to mount the horse that stood without the entrance ready for her, now moved to compassion by the horrid threats of the torture which Peter held out to Gilbert, turned towards him, and said, in a mild but firm manner, "There is no justice in cruelty; spare that wretched man the torture, lest the agonies of his body so distract his mind, that he die without penitence to God; nay, Du Bois, spare him."

"Yes," cried Du Bois, "I will spare him, even as he did our ancient leader and captain; I will spare him the remaining portion of time that might have been allotted to him in this world; and if, as priests tell us, a sudden death be sometimes but a swifter road to eternal misery, he shall this night speed his flight to meet it. Come, prepare," continued Du Bois, as he looked upon the amazed culprit; "confession shall obtain for thee the grace of hang-

ing; otherwise, tortures that shall wring thy miscreant limbs, and tear thy court-pampered body piecemeal, shall force from thy dying agony such intelligence as I would learn. — Here comes my varlet, and with him the instruments of vengeance; hold forth thy hand, deacon, and see how it can bear this iron."

"Du Bois," said Bianca, interposing, "I forbid this cruelty. Nay, on thy peril, I command thee to forbear it; in the name of thy noble colleague, Von Artaveld, I forbid it. He will execute justice upon the guilty; but never will he sanction an act of torture."

"Leave us, woman," replied Du Bois; and he added, in his accustomed tone of sarcasm, "you are strangely changed, your nature is altered with your apparel, I trow. Yet I remember when the delicate Bianca could, under a woman's gite, cherish feelings that others of her sex, all as delicate, would have termed bold and cruel. But the new page is turned effeminate, and practises fantasies even in wantonness."

"I heed not your taunts," said Bianca; "or rather, I receive them as my due, since, alas!

she who has once unhappily forgotten to honour herself, must look to be so forgotten by others. But I will not quit this spot whilst you deal with Gilbert Matthew."

"You will not," answered Du Bois; "who made *you* the supervisor of Du Bois?"

"My own resolution," replied Bianca; "I will witness, and report your conduct, to Von Artaveld."

"Do so, then," said Du Bois scornfully; "and begin the account with telling him, that it is *I* who dare to affix this iron on the hand of the most cunning villain that ever it yet grasped — that it is *I* who thus clench it with the gripe of torture."

Gilbert Matthew, who, naturally a coward, had been hitherto absolutely dumb from terror and amazement, scarcely knowing what passed around him, whilst a ghastly paleness overspread his countenance, and every limb trembled with fear, *now*, on feeling the iron, (that was so constructed as to inflict on pressure the most acute torture,) *now* seemed at once to be recalled to his senses by intolerable pain, and he

exclaimed aloud, in a voice that resembled a scream more than an exclamation, "Forbear, forbear, save me from the torture, and I will tell you all, nay, more than you desire to know. Save my life; grant me but life, and I can tell you what this night shall give success to your cause."

"Nay," said Du Bois, "I will keep my faith with thee, wretch as thou art, and unworthy even the grace of a dog that is hanged by a tight rope, or drowned with a stone about his neck, to put him quickly out of misery; yet will I keep my faith. Confess — give up all thy intelligence trusted to thy care, thy craft and cunning, and the torture shall be spared. Death is a short debt which all pay one day or other, and thine shall be swift and easy."

Gilbert, who was alike a coward and a villain, wished for nothing so much as life, so he might gain it on any terms. He now, in a fit of absolute despair, threw himself at the feet of Du Bois, caught hold of his mantle that hung over his armour, and clinging to it, supplicated servilely and fervently for life; whilst his face,

hitherto pale with fear, became flushed and moist with the very energy of despair. "Noble Du Bois," said he, "give me but life, but life on any terms, and I will tell you all. I will betray the Earl of Flanders, the French; I will serve you, I will join your cause, obey you, toil for you. Give me but life, and I will be your slave. Save me but from death, and I will kneel to you for ever."

Whilst the miserable Gilbert Matthew thus continued to plead for life in the most abject terms, Peter Du Bois stood with his arms folded together, and looked upon him with an unchanged mien. It was that countenance of hardened coldness and indifference which neither shewed to Gilbert a ray of hope, nor yet a positive persistance in his vengeance; and it seemed as if Du Bois, for the indulgence of his accustomed malice, was determined to let him plead on as long as he would, in order to hold Gilbert in the worst of all tortures, that of suspense. The wretch again entreated; but Du Bois still remaining silent, he turned to Bianca, and conjured her to plead for him.

A glance of indignation flashed from the expressive eyes of the Italian. "Do not appeal to me," she said; "if any thing could steel my heart to make me wholly insensible to the tortures and death that threaten you, it would be that base and abject spirit which can thus stoop to beg for life, on terms that would disgrace a slave. Yet, Du Bois, let this man live; for surely to grant to him a life so contemptible must at last be the worst punishment you can inflict upon him. He will live despised by all men."

"No," said Du Bois; "let him speak his intelligence, and I will spare him the torture; but he shall die, I will crush him with as little commiseration as I would the earth-worm that crawls at my foot."

Gilbert now saw there was no hope, and despair, aided by the natural cunning of his mind, suggested to him an expedient which his spirit as a man would never have supplied. He suddenly rose up, and assuming a dogged look, held out his hand as if to receive the torture, and exclaimed, "Well then, since I must die, I

will die by the torture. I will not accept of any half conditions; I will have life or nothing; and too late may you learn, Du Bois, that had you but granted life to Gilbert Matthew, he could at this hour have placed your bravest, your most successful, aye, your most inveterate enemy, within your power. He could have given to you Sir Walter d'Anghien, aye, and your run-away kinswoman Anna, to boot."

"What," said Du Bois, "what is this you aver? Could you, upon the very eve of battle, place within our power Sir Walter d'Anghien? Such a prize might make the day our own; he is the very life-blood to the Earl's cause. Without him not a man of Lewis's party but would lead on dispirited and heart-fallen. The French alliance would be as nothing; and even, if we spare his life, such a hostage in our hands, should the battle fail to be decisive, would enable us to make our own terms. What proof have you that this is true?"

"There needs no proof," replied Gilbert. "I can offer none but a life you have already pronounced forfeited; but this I can do, I can

pay the forfeit, die, and keep my own counsel. On the other hand, promise me but to spare my life, if what I assert *be* true, and within an hour, if you do as I direct, Sir Walter d'Anghien shall stand your prisoner within this very tent. If you fail, or if I speak falsely, you can but execute your vengeance upon me."

Du Bois mused a moment; he looked stedfastly upon Gilbert Matthew, who met his gaze with a steady unmoved effrontery; for even a coward can be firm when life depends on firmness, and it was Gilbert's last and only chance: "Yes," said Du Bois, "it is worth the trial. Wretch that thou art, although I hate and loathe thee, yet will I profit by thee; if any thing like profit can come from thy villainy and cunning. Yes, I will promise to spare thy worthless, thy low, thy abject life. Thou shalt be free to breathe the air as toads are, whilst they infect it. If thy assurances prove true, if Sir Walter d'Anghien by thy counsel is placed within my power, this night thou shalt live; but if thou hast deceived me, (or if I even fail in the attempt,) thou shalt die in tortures linger-

ing and terrible, worse than even thy own fears can paint them, and thine are the fears of a coward."

"Then lose not a moment," said Gilbert Matthew, eagerly; "take a strong guard of thy most determined men-at-arms. Go direct, and with all speed, to the convent of St. Magdalen; surround it. You will there meet with Sir Walter d'Anghien conducting the daughter of John Lyon to place her in that sanctuary till the battle of the morrow is past. His men are but few; he may be overpowered without a blow being struck, since he cannot resist numbers, desperate as he is in courage. But lose not a moment, or it will be too late."

Du Bois obeyed this last counsel on the instant. He summoned a chosen band, left Gilbert under a strong guard to be held in readiness for life or death, as the enterprize should succeed or fail, and set off with all speed for the convent of St. Magdalen, which was not indeed far off. He had no doubt that he should reach its walls before Sir Walter; since, in order to avoid falling in with any of the

White Hoods, D'Anghien had taken a long and circuitous route in his passage from the French camp to the convent.

Bianca now left the tent, in order to proceed to *Mont d'Or*, where she was to take her station to hold the horse in readiness for Von Artaveld, should necessity require him to use the noble animal on the morrow. As she mounted to set off, she heard the distant trampling of horses feet, at length they died away as the party headed by Du Bois quitted the outskirts of the camp on their daring enterprize.

Bianca trembled when she reflected upon what had so lately passed within the camp; and though she recollected the injuries she had sustained from Lewis de Male, occasioned by his love for the beautiful Anna, yet, amidst her own bitter reflections, she now felt pity for Anna's unoffending innocence, and for her impending fate.

CHAP. XI.

Upon the morning of that day, so eventful in the annals of Flemish history, the dawn broke faintly and dimly through clouds of deep obscurity. One vast curtain of dusky vapour seemed to hang above the heads of the opposed armies, and to hide, with its grey and heavy veil, the sun that had arisen again to lighten up the earth. There is a solemnity of feeling which accompanies the expectation of every great event in our lives, and hardened indeed must be the mind wholly insensible to such a feeling. The present hour was one capable of inspiring it in every bosom throughout the camp; for, fraught with high expectation, anxious hope, and awful suspense, it was rendered yet more solemn by this dull and melancholy approach of day. The scene was uniform; but its vastness and monotony, unbroken by one cheering circumstance, seemed but an

image fitted to the coming time, where death, with his train of horrors, was so soon to assert his empire over man, and conquer, alike of the conquering or the vanquished, as many as were given to his power.

The clear but deep note of a solitary bell was now heard throughout the camp of the allied armies, as the summons to one general mass, previous to the battle. In eager haste, the nobles, the courtiers, and the knights, hurried to the tent of the young King, where they were to be present to assist in the solemn office.

Clad in armour, with a grave and becoming mien, bareheaded from respect to the sanctity of the occasion, Charles advanced near to the temporary altar that had been prepared within his tent; and there, after the mass was duly said, he reverently confessed himself to his own chaplain, whilst those of his court followed his example. The priests who attended the army had enough to do at this time, and would have had more than enough, but that the young warriors, eager for the fray, and thinking more

on victory than on death, made but a short shrift.

The mass ended, the young King graciously received, from his cup-bearer, the goblet that was offered to him, on bended knee, by his attendant. He drank of the wine, and, bowing to all his assembled knights, pledged to their success in arms. The example was followed by all present; but when the Lord Lewis de Male took the cup, he was observed to hold it with a trembling hand, and his countenance expressed an extraordinary and intense anxiety of mind. "Cousin of Flanders," said the King, "God forbid that thy brow, like the heavy mist of this morning, should augur evil to our cause. Cousin, it is thy own cause we are about to uphold. Look, then, upon our people, and our gallant train, with a cheerful and assured mien, and not as if you doubted either their good faith or the strength of their lances in your behalf."

"I doubt neither, my gracious prince," replied Lewis de Male; "but there is something

I fain would speak to your grace in private, something which has much moved me."

"Good, my lords and gentle knights," said Charles, "draw aside awhile, that we may learn from this noble Earl the cause of his grief, in the hope to remedy it by our counsel, or to give it our sympathy."

The attendants instantly drew aside, and Lewis eagerly told the young King his fears on the strange and unaccountable absence of Sir Walter d'Anghien, at a time when his presence was most needed. "I know not what to think," said Lewis. "If the absence of my nephew become generally known before the onset, my people will be dispirited; for Sir Walter is the idol of the men-at-arms, he has so often led them on to victory; and should a false and malicious report become current, that he has forsaken my cause, I much fear many would desert me, on the bare supposition, that for some injustice of mine Sir Walter had abandoned me at the very hour I most need his support."

"It is indeed extraordinary," said the King; "can you in no way account for the absence of Sir Walter? At this time, his own honour and the love of gallant deeds, even without an interest in your cause, would lead him to seek victory; for a spirit like D'Anghien's, daring and full of fire, courts danger as a pastime, and meets it, as the lion doth the hunter's spear, with reckless defiance."

"I fear," replied Lewis, "but yet I dare speak it to no ear save that of my gracious prince, I fear Sir Walter has fallen into the hands of the White Hoods. I would conjure your majesty to think what can be done to gain some intelligence of my gallant nephew, and yet to prevent his absence from becoming generally known, lest it should spread a panic throughout my own bands."

Charles listened with deep interest. He mused a moment, and then said, "We blame ourself; it was an act of imprudence in us to sanction Sir Walter's leaving the camp last night to conduct the damsel under your charge to the

convent of St. Magdalen. We will do what we can to be of service; the remedy, perhaps, may be too late, but we will try it. Sir Walter's absence for the present must not be known to your people. The deep mist of this morning may for a time help to beguile them; for the fog is so dense, one wing of our army cannot behold the other; thus may each believe Sir Walter to be stationed with the other. In the meantime I will take upon me to put in execution a plan that I feel my uncles would not allow if they knew it. My plan is this — the burgomaster of the White Hoods, Sir Simon de Bête, is our prisoner: we will make known to him what has chanced; there is much honesty in that old man, let my uncles say what they will about him. He shall go to the camp of his own people, and we will exact from him a promise that he shall seek out Sir Walter d'Anghien, should your nephew be in the hands of the Ghent men, and send him back hither in exchange for himself, prisoner for prisoner."

"I fear Du Bois will never consent to that

measure," replied Lewis. "He will deem such a prisoner as Sir Walter worth fifty of Sir Simon's standing."

"I grant it is a desperate chance," said Charles, "but it seems to me the only one. Here, my Lord Lewis, bear my ring to the guard who have Sir Simon under their charge. Give him liberty and a swift steed; let him have a safe conduct to the outpost. Let not a moment be lost; but charge them to keep silent what I have done, or there are those who will overrule even their prince. Take the ring and begone."

Lewis de Male instantly obeyed the young King's suggestion. Sir Simon heard the Earl's communication with a feeling of the liveliest interest; and when he learnt that his beloved and adopted child Anna, and her faithful Sir Walter, had probably fallen into the hands of the White Hoods, he exclaimed, "If Von Artaveld holds them, there is nothing to fear: but if Du Bois is their keeper — for God's sake let me to horse, I will instantly away;" and so saying he left the tent, mounted a horse that he could scarcely manage, and prepared to

depart with only four or five men-at-arms appointed by the Earl to attend him in his embassy to the enemy's camp, and swearing to Lewis that he would serve Sir Walter and Anna whilst a drop of blood flowed in his veins, Sir Simon set off full speed towards the army of his fellow-citizens.

No sooner had Sir Simon departed than the Earl of Flanders returned to the King's tent. He found Charles cased in his armour, and ready to lead on his own battalion in support of the van of the army, that was this day to be headed by Sir Oliver de Clisson, the left wing being committed to the charge of Lewis de Male. To each distinguished leader, a conspicuous post was assigned, and all seemed eager to engage in the conflict. The name of Sir Walter d'Anghien was now repeated, and Lewis intimated that his nephew was busied in marshalling a part of his own band, thus artfully endeavouring to hide the circumstance of his absence, as he too justly feared a knowledge of it might be injurious to his cause.

All the chief knights and leaders were impa-

tient to leave the King's tent, to take their several stations, but none was more impatient than Charles himself, who now looked upon his shield, and now upon his sword, as if he longed to display them in the face of open day, and at the head of his people. His uncles, and Sir Oliver de Clisson, who had given their consent that even at his tender age the prince should take the field, agreed so to station and surround him that he should be as much as possible guarded from personal danger. Again Charles urged his Constable to quit the tent; and turning to the young Count de Montmorenci, who bore the oriflamme, that sacred banner, in his hand, he said, "Noble Montmorenci, that holy banner, which is never unfurled but when a king of France leads on his people in his own person, that banner does but droop here. Oh! how I long to see it wave in the open field, as it rises far above all other banners, even as the prince, whose presence it proclaims, should rise above other men in valour as he does in greatness, else is he unworthy of a

crown. My Lord Constable, why do we tarry here?"

Sir Oliver de Clisson, delighted to witness the gallant bearing of the young King, exclaimed, whilst he embraced Charles with paternal affection, "God defend you, gracious boy; there spoke the blood of France. The crown sits upon a young brow, but upon a bold one. May Oliver de Clisson live but to see you win a fair fame in arms, the victor of this field, and he will gladly die, and lay his bones beside your noble father in the tomb. But there is one thing that a young man in arms, though a prince, must learn from an old one, *prudence.* Haste will often betray a good cause. We will all to our stations; but the van must not advance during this deep mist. Our enemies are strongly posted; we shall but confuse ourselves, since they know the country, and we do not. Let us wait, and watch in profound silence the favourable moment; and I will give the signal."

Sir Oliver then explained his plan of attack

at large to all the leaders, and each submitted, with respect, to the acknowledged skill and experience of the veteran leader; and at length the assembly quitted the King's tent, and proceeded to take their stations in the field.

Whilst these events were passing in the camp of the allied armies, Philip Von Artaveld, impatient of delay, and eager for the conflict, led his own band, the flower of his army, at once boldly forward. Philip, though acute in moments of danger when engaged man to man, still had neither the experience nor the prudence of De Clisson in the commencement of a battle; he was liable, therefore, to mistake the designs of his enemy; and now, finding that the French did not advance, as he expected, to the attack, he began to think lightly of them, and resolved that he would march forward at once, take entire possession of *Mont d'Or*, (so that his own army might have the advantage of the hill, which separated them from the allies,) and thence pour down upon them in the plains.

Von Artaveld went from wing to wing, almost from rank to rank, haranguing and encouraging

his people. The spirit and eloquence of his address, his noble mien, and his confident bearing, gained for him all hearts, whilst he diffused around him, by his example, a spirit like his own; and a thousand tongues at once answered to his proposal for the onset, with the cries of "Lead on! lead on! we will follow to *Mont d'Or*; we will follow Von Artaveld even to death. Ghent! Ghent! Von Artaveld! Von Artaveld!"

All had been prepared; the cannon, on the previous night, was already planted and levelled by the direction of Philip. The fiery leader raised his sword and waved it in the air, as he rushed forward, and was the first to tread the ascent of *Mont d'Or*. A grove of trees skirted the foot of the hill, and continued rising even to the summit on the side towards Ghent. Von Artaveld quickly passed the outskirts of the grove; and as he thus led on his people, three knights, each mounted on the noble war-horse, and having their visors closed, were seen riding near, as if observing the movements of the White Hoods.

One of Von Artaveld's captains now advanced, and said to him, "Yonder knights are of the Earl's party; they come to reconnoitre us, and to report our progress to the army of France. They are within our power; shall we sally forward and quell them?"

"No," said Von Artaveld, "let them look upon us, for we are men who bear arms in a just cause; and we will spare them, if it were only for their boldness. They are no cravens who dare thus expose themselves to danger; anon we will meet them in the field — the braver the foe, the more honourable is victory. Do them no harm."

Von Artaveld having advanced near the summit of *Mont d'Or*, observed, under one of those trees that skirted the grove, his unfortunate mistress holding by the reins the noble animal she had designed should bear Philip from danger in case of a defeat; for, as leader of his party, he had determined this day to combat on foot with his fellow-citizens. Von Artaveld could not resist the wish he felt to speak with Bianca for a moment; and he now bade his people

march forward, whilst he gave some orders to his page, promising to rejoin them in a few minutes. Turning, therefore, towards the spot where Bianca was stationed, he led her apart into the grove, with the intent there to bid her a last adieu.

Bianca's countenance was of a deadly pallid hue, and she looked upon Von Artaveld with an expression that seemed to say, "You are come, then, to this fatal spot," for her lips moved, but she was unable to speak.

"Bianca," said Philip, "I have but a moment to parley with you; my band are on the march to commence the onset, I must not leave them now, even for you. Perhaps," he added, "we may never meet more. Farewell, Bianca; may God bless you."

"Stay a moment, stay," exclaimed Bianca. "Oh, Von Artaveld, I know not how it is, but my heart misgives me. Do not combat on *Mont d'Or*. Return with your people to the strong position you occupied this morning at the foot of the hill, and there wait the onset."

"What!" cried Philip; "retreat! Shall it

be said that I have dared to venture upon this post of danger, but dared not to maintain it! Never, Bianca; I would rather die a thousand deaths, than save my life by an act worthy only of a craven heart. I must be brief. Hear me; the animal you have hither brought as a means of flight may be used to a better purpose, for know, Bianca, I must this day conquer or leave my body on the field. I cannot, I will not fly. But should victory attend upon our arms, and our enemies be routed in the contest, then, Bianca, mount your gallant steed, and swiftly guide it to me. My people will make way for my page, and I will use the noble animal to follow up the retreat of my enemies, and to charge upon them. This, Bianca, this is the only benefit I can derive from your act of service to me."

Bianca looked up in Von Artaveld's face, and was about to speak. "Nay, forbear all entreaty," he said, "not even you can change my purpose. I will never fly before my enemies. I must begone. I dare not trust myself to witness the tender feelings of woman at such

a moment. Once more, farewell. Place yourself within this grove, and you will be safe till the conflict is over. May Heaven guard you."

"Nay, one word," said Bianca; "it is of import, though it does not concern myself, and perhaps it may operate upon your mind to cause you to quit this ill omened spot. Gilbert Matthew, after you left the camp, became the prisoner of Du Bois. Gilbert betrayed Sir Walter d'Anghien into his power, and as I left the tent at early dawn, Du Bois also quitted it, to seize upon Sir Walter, and the orphan of John Lyon, who was in his company. I fear that he will deal foully with them both, unless you return and prevent it; for you know Du Bois is this day to keep his station near the camp. All there is under his controul."

Von Artaveld appeared greatly disturbed at what he heard from Bianca. "Had Sir Walter," said he, "become our prisoner in battle, I should rejoice; but I lament that so noble a spirit should fall into the hands of Du Bois by treachery; and I lament, too, that the bravest foe I would encounter, will be absent

from the field. I cannot now return to save him. I should betray my own people by deserting them at such a crisis; and I think Du Bois would not dare to act dishonourably by such a prisoner. After the battle, I will seek him out. Adieu, Bianca."

"And must you go?" said Bianca. "Thank God, this then will be my last pang. Henceforth, all is a blank to me."

"Farewell, Bianca," repeated Von Artaveld — "one kiss; it is the last. — Nay, not a tear, you will unman me. I must on. — Hark! hear you the trumpet? it calls me hence. How shrill is that blast that bids to the battle and to death. One day, our faith tells us, its deep note will awake the dead to judgment. Oh! Bianca, should we never meet again till then, may the God of mercy pardon us both, for we have both sinned. May we be happy."

Von Artaveld pressed Bianca fervently to his bosom, once more kissed her pale lips, and rushed from her. For some moments Bianca remained motionless on the spot where she had parted from Von Artaveld, and followed him,

with a fixed gaze and strained eyes, till he was lost to her view. No sooner had she entirely lost sight of him than she burst into tears, and a deep feeling of her own desolate condition at once rushed upon her mind. Whilst the former partner of his guilty love, she had used her influence to urge him to become a rebel, she had brought him into danger; in these agitating moments, she viewed her own conduct even in exaggerated colours, and thought, that should Philip fall this day in battle, she was the cause of his death.

Thus do the guilty too often suffer by the very success of their own crimes; for too well Bianca felt that she *had succeeded* in stimulating Philip to rebellion, and in these moments of anxiety, suspense, and dread, she was without that happy repose of conscience which arms the mind to bear calamity with calm resolution and fervent hope. Convinced that in Von Artaveld she had now lost the only friend she had on earth, he became in these moments even dear to her, and she felt for him a tenderness unknown to her before; so true is the old and

common remark, that we often value that which we once possessed, more at the time it is lost to us for ever, than when it was our own. Unable longer to see Von Artaveld from her station in the grove, Bianca secured her horse by the bridle to a bough of one of the trees, and then leaving their covert, she stept forward, and placed herself upon a mound of earth near the summit of *Mont d'Or*, which commanded a full view of those extensive plains where the enemy was stationed. In consequence of the deep obscurity of the morning, Bianca at first saw but imperfectly the opposed armies, but, convinced that as the day cleared she should from this spot command a full sight of the battle, she there resolved to await the event of it.

For some time both armies continued to advance in profound silence, but still the thick mist in which they were enveloped prevented their coming into action. The chronicler of the time declares, that this mist was so dense and heavy that scarcely could they distinguish a few paces before them; but that, when the oriflamme was unfurled, the thick vapour instantly dis-

persed, the clouds opened, and, changing their heavy leaden hue to one of fleecy whiteness, a brilliant sunshine illumined the whole scene, not a breath of wind disturbed the azure firmament, whilst a white dove flew thrice above the heads of the King's battalion, and at length perched upon the oriflamme; a circumstance hailed by the French as an omen of good fortune to their arms.

The scene which now presented itself to the anxious eye of Bianca, as the dispersing mist afforded her a clear view of the plain beneath, was one of mingled solemnity and magnificence. The allied armies, consisting of the most gallant nobles of France, the flower of Flemish knighthood, and their chosen bands of men-at-arms, advanced with banners and pennons streaming in the air; their bright armour and helmets flashing as they glittered in the sun. Some, bearing the lance, were seen mounted on the war-horse, richly armed and caparisoned for the field; others on foot, armed with the cross or long bow, the formidable bill, or the sharp axe; whilst, by the closeness of their ranks, and the

regular order of their march, they looked like one vast, compact, and moving body, impenetrable and irresistible in its strength. The heralds, covered with their costly coats, and mounted on their steeds, blew the shrill blast that proclaimed a preparation for the onset.

Von Artaveld heard the note, and immediately formed his own battalion into a compact body, and commanded his people to advance. The sight of his foes so near at hand, their stern preparations of defiance, their numbers and their strength, excited the highest degree of enthusiasm in the breast of the gallant Philip. His heart swelled within him, and all thoughts and feelings were forgotten but those of dauntless resolution and high achievement. In a moment he gave the signal, his trumpet blew but one shrill blast, and instantly a hundred pieces of cannon discharged from their loud throats bars of iron, and quarrels headed with brass. Von Artaveld, immediately after this discharge upon his foes, raised his sword and rushed forward to the onset, in order to attack the enemy ere they could recover from their

surprise. He commanded the charge that should bring them man to man with their opponents.

De Clisson saw the crisis, and observing that, by this rash movement, Von Artaveld had lost the advantage of the rising ground, he instantly issued orders to endeavour to surround these desperate assailants. In a short space the Earl of Flanders with his band was upon them on their right wing, Montmorenci on their left, whilst De Clisson led the vanguard to the close assault. The ensuing conflict was brief, desperate, and decisive; for the Flemings, hemmed in on every side, became unable to act with any effect; their staves, short and heavy, afforded no equal match to the sharp spears of their enemies. In the confusion of the *melée*, pressed on all sides, and surrounded, they were speedily cut to pieces, and many were actually smothered under the heaps of the fallen and the slain.

Von Artaveld too late saw his error, and followed by a few determined men, with a strength and prowess that seemed almost super-

natural, he burst through the enemy's ranks, dealing death around him, and rushing forward, endeavoured to regain his former position towards the summit of *Mont d'Or*, *there* to make a stand; convinced that his fate was inevitable, but resolute to resist even to the last moment of life. Philip was speedily pursued by a host of foes; his few followers were cut to pieces, not *one* escaped, and at length Von Artaveld, covered with wounds, sunk upon the ground, a lifeless corpse. Satisfied with their success, his assailants instantly left the body, and hastening to rejoin the battle, they retraced their steps towards the plain.

Bianca saw Von Artaveld fall, and rushing towards the spot, she endeavoured to give what aid might be within her power. To kneel by his side, to raise his head in her arms, to tear off the helmet that bore but too plainly the marks of the fatal blow, was the work of a moment. But no sooner did she look upon the livid countenance, the fixed eyes, and motionless lips of Von Artaveld, than, involuntarily letting fall the head she held upon her bosom,

she clasped her hands together, and exclaimed, "Great God! he is dead!" No other words escaped her lips. A deep sense of horror chilled her blood, and for some minutes she appeared stupified by the conviction of this sudden and terrible event.

Again she seemed to recollect herself, and, instantly tearing off the armour from the corpse, she chafed the lifeless hands, the forehead, and the breast, but the pulse had ceased to beat, the blood to flow. Whilst Bianca thus vainly endeavoured to reanimate the lifeless corpse, she heard persons advancing near her. "They come to seek his body," said she wildly; "they shall not triumph over him in death; for oh! he is dead — quite dead. I will endeavour to remove him from this spot; I will cast my mantle upon his face, to conceal it, if possible, from their view."

Bianca hastily threw her mantle about the head of Von Artaveld, and attempted to drag the body towards the mound of earth where she had taken her stand to witness the conflict. As thus she stooped down, something, accompanied

with a whizzing noise, darted through the air, and Bianca fell upon the corpse, her bosom transfixed by an arrow shot at random from some hand that was engaged in the battle; for by this time the forces of La Nuitee had come up to reinforce Von Artaveld. They arrived too late to assist that gallant leader, but yet soon enough to make the victory of the allied armies doubtful. The battle was now concentrated in the plain, and it must have been from a small party engaged in a skirmish on *Mont d'Or* that Bianca had received the fatal shaft. This party, however, immediately hastened to join the general conflict on the plain; so that *Mont d'Or* was now left with not a human form upon it, save the dying or the dead.

As the unhappy Bianca lay sickening and faint, her life blood fast issuing from the wound she had received, a groupe of the miserable followers of the insurgents camp at length advanced. They consisted chiefly of women of the lowest orders in Ghent, armed with sharp and long knives to finish that work commenced

by war, to butcher the wounded, and to strip the dead of whatever gold or jewels might be upon them. Amongst this savage crew was Ursula, who, delighting in whatever was most cruel, had hastened to *Mont d'Or*, there to assist in the horrid slaughter of the dying.

The rich apparel of the miserable Bianca soon attracted the notice of these wretches, and Ursula, who immediately recognized the victim of her avarice, and her accursed arts, rushed forward, and bending over the body of the wounded Italian, extended her arm as she held her knife in a threatening manner, and looked upon Bianca with savage exultation. "Now," she said, "now is the prophecy accomplished. Thy paramour lies a corpse beside thee, and thy life blood is fast flowing from thy breast. The fiends hover round thee to bear away thy departing spirit, and the curse of Ursula shall pursue thee to the tomb."

"Cruel, execrable woman," replied Bianca, in a faint voice, "dost thou come only to disturb the last moments of my life, a life which but for thee had been guiltless? Leave me — quit my

sight. Thou canst not give me back that innocence which thy temptations first corrupted; do not, then, deprive me of the few moments left for my repentance. Let me pray to God."

"No," said Ursula, "thou shalt die as thou hast lived, in infamy — and thy prayers shall avail thee nothing, whilst Ursula stands here to curse thee, and to bid thee despair of mercy. Bianca, thou didst scorn and upbraid me when we last met; it is my turn now. And though thou wert at this moment uttering the last sigh of fleeting life, I would take vengeance, and make that moment miserable and terrible to thee."

"The sight of thee is terrible indeed," said Bianca. "Leave me, woman, or, if thou wilt not, plunge thy dagger in my heart, take from it quickly what yet remains of lingering life, and save me from the horror of looking upon thee."

Ursula laughed. "Thou shalt have granted the only prayer thou hast yet uttered with effect; it shall be answered to thy wish. Die! die! and perish eternally!" As the frantic and wicked sorceress raised her knife with both hands to

plunge it into the bosom of her victim, her arms were suddenly and forcibly arrested by some one who had softly stolen behind her unperceived, whilst her companions in blood were employed in stripping the dead at a little distance from the spot. The act was so sudden that the knife fell from Ursula's hand, and turning to see who had thus interrupted her, she beheld Sir Simon de Bête, the burgomaster of Ghent, who, attended by a few men-at-arms, had come upon her unawares, in time to save Bianca the few remaining moments of her life.

Sir Simon, who felt the necessity that existed for affording instant relief to the wounded Italian, had little time to waste upon her cruel enemy. He only said, "Thou most detestable witch, I have thee now secure. Would you rob yonder poor wounded creature of what chance may yet remain for life, only to possess a few baubles that glitter in a page's apparel. Here," he continued to some of his followers, "bind this sorceress. Convey her to the French camp, and there say but her name, and the death she has deserved will be instantly

awarded to her; for, by some means or other, the Duke of Burgundy has learnt all her arts about the bridge of Commines, and, but this morning, he has received intelligence from one of his own people that the Countess of Artois is dead of a most mysterious sickness, supposed to be occasioned by some drug administered to her by this old beldame — away with her, she will grace a tar barrel and a stake."

Ursula darted a fierce look upon Sir Simon. She was about to speak, but the worthy man, anxious to offer what assistance he could to Bianca, motioned to some of his followers to remove the detested woman from the spot. They did so, whilst Ursula vented curses that were lost in the air ere they reached the ears of those for whom they were designed.

Sir Simon, assisted by two or three persons, who still remained with him, gently raised the dying woman, and attempted to staunch the blood that flowed from her bosom. Bianca looked up in the good man's face, and endeavoured to thank him for his kindness. "But all," she added faintly, "all is too late; I feel

life departing; in a few minutes all will be past with me for ever. Trouble yourself, then, no more with one who is unworthy your least care. But you have a heart for pity; pray to God for me, I can scarce do it for myself, pray that he will shew me mercy."

"Alas! alas! poor damsel," said Sir Simon, "this is a sad way to die in, tricked out in a garb not fitting to your sex, on a wild hill too, in the midst of a battle, and with no one near to comfort you but an old man, who can do nothing but shew his own weakness." He wiped a tear from his eyes as he spoke. "Perhaps," he added, "you may yet live, at least let my people try to remove you, that you may receive such ghostly comfort as the rites of our church can give you ere you die."

"Oh forbear! forbear!" said Bianca, more faintly. "I feel the moment fast approaching that must call me hence to God; the least motion would be instant death, and a moment is now precious; it may be the last. Oh! holy Saints and Angels," she added as she cast her dying eyes towards Heaven, "how shall I meet

the offended justice of Omnipotence when I have spent my life in the violation of his laws."

"Meet *Him*," said Sir Simon, in a solemn yet feeling manner, "meet Him as a child doth an offended parent. Confess thy sin, and trust in his love and mercy. And I, who now stand by thy side, as thy fellow-creature in the bond of humanity and of sin, I dare support thee, unhappy woman, in thy dying moments, with the assurance that God, the common father of us all, will gather to his bosom his repentant children, even as the shepherd gathers his wandering flock into one fold."

Sir Simon cast himself on his knees as he spoke; he took Bianca in his arms, laid her head on his bosom, and putting both her hands within his own, in the attitude of prayer, he fervently and piously implored Heaven in her behalf. Bianca moved her lips, as if joining with the good man in fervent supplication. This ended, he once more attempted to raise her; but as he did so, her head fell and rested upon her bosom. Sir Simon looked in her face. The features were still beautiful, but

there was no expression; the soul had left its tenement, and death was settled there. It seemed that Bianca had been so far sensible as to be able mentally to join Sir Simon in this last act of duty, and, exhausted by loss of blood, she had expired in his arms, without even a sigh escaping her lips.

Sir Simon gazed for a moment, and then gently put the body down upon that earth, which was now its kindred element. He shook his head, wiped his eyes, and said, mournfully, "Poor thing! all is over now. Thy life was once sinful, indeed; but thy death was such as all our deaths should be, humble and penitent. And who shall examine his own heart, and then dare say to his fellow being, 'thy sin is greater than mine?' By and by I will see thy remains interred within holy ground; and if I can do for thee this pious act, as it ought to be done, scorn shall not follow thee to thy last home."

He turned to his people, "Close down the eyes," he said, "and take up that mantle that lies yonder, and cast it upon her face. I must

instantly onward to seek the young King of France. I go to seek him on business of such vital import, that nothing but a scene like this could for a moment have detained me by the way. Mark well the spot, and return hither anon to bear away the body. But, holy Virgin! what have you uncovered — what do I see — Von Artaveld! his body lies near Bianca. Oh! this is a sad, sad sight, indeed. My brave, my dear, my gallant fellow-citizen, art thou fallen? all young and noble as thou wast; and do I live to see it? This is a dreadful hour indeed! Ghent! Ghent! all is lost to thee for ever, since Von Artaveld is slain! Von Artaveld!

Sir Simon burst into a flood of tears, and stood indulging them over the body for some moments. He appeared at length to recover his recollection, and instantly commanded one of his people to watch by the corpse of Philip and Bianca till he should return. "I must no longer delay," said he, "or another brave spirit will be lost. I must seek out the King. Let us set forward without delay, we shall soon descend this hill."

Sir Simon gained the plain beneath, and, avoiding the general conflict, by taking a circuitous route, he sooned gained the rear of the army, where Charles was stationed at the head of his battalion. At the moment Sir Simon came up, the King was talking with Montmorenci and St. Py, as if urging them to assist him in escaping from his secure station, (where he had been posted by his uncles,) that he might join the battle.

Sir Simon was in a few minutes by the young King's side. He now drew him apart; and for some time, spoke to him in *private*, as he returned the ring given for his commission. What Sir Simon then said to the gallant prince may hereafter appear. Whatever it was, it certainly made a powerful impression upon Charles; since he instantly was seen to draw aside his two favourite knights, and seemed to be vehemently conversing with them.

The conference ended, Charles himself dared to disobey his uncles. He gave the word to march; and his whole band, attended by De Montmorenci, St. Py, and Sir Simon, left their

secure station. The youthful monarch headed his own battalion, and now led them on to an attempt that shall hereafter be stated at large.

CHAP. XII.

Although, in the preceding chapter, the order of our narrative obliged us to give, in connection, some account of those circumstances that ended with the deaths of the brave Von Artaveld and the unfortunate Bianca, it is necessary that we should now enter upon a detail of events that passed immediately after Philip and Bianca had quitted the insurgents' camp; and for this purpose, we shall at once carry back the reader to the tent of Peter du Bois.

Du Bois had but too well succeeded in his enterprize; he returned to the camp with both Anna and Sir Walter d'Anghien as prisoners, having surprised and overpowered their party, ere they reached the convent of St. Magdalen. Within the tent was seen Sir Walter, disarmed and manacled like a common felon; his mien still dignified, and his countenance expressive

of those strong feelings of indignation that swelled within his bosom; feelings which he vainly endeavoured to conceal in the attempt to appear composed, so that he might, as much as possible, spare the sufferings of his beloved Anna.

The orphan stood near him, her dress torn and disordered by the violence that had been used to separate her from Sir Walter; who had endeavoured to defend her, as she clung to him in the late conflict: her countenance, white as the monumental marble, whose image of sorrow she might at this moment represent, so completely was she overpowered by the sudden and terrible event that made her a prisoner. One idea alone possessed her mind, and harrowed all her feelings — Sir Walter was within the power of his enemy, and *that* enemy was Du Bois. — The conviction she entertained of this circumstance shut out all hope.

Anna stood mute and trembling, with an air of fearful expectation painted in every feature of her expressive countenance. In these awful moments she might be compared to the

mariner, whose ship has struck upon a rock, surrounded by tumultuous breakers, that come swelling and roaring on every side of the fated vessel, whilst he looks around him but to witness which of those fearful billows shall engulph him and his hopes for ever.

Du Bois alone was seated. There was an air of triumph in his aspect, that, added to its natural malign and sarcastic expression, seemed to speak such joy as it might be supposed an evil spirit would feel on the acquisition of a human soul. Cruel by nature, he took a wanton delight in prolonging the sufferings of those who fell within the scope of his hatred and his power.

At length, in his accustomed ironical tone, Du Bois thus spoke to Sir Walter. "That hand, most invincible D'Anghien, which could so well wield the lance, that it scrupled not to raise it against the lives of the citizens of Ghent, that hand, it seems, can bear the shackles of cold iron with as good grace as any malefactor within the prisons of thy uncle, our most worshipful Earl of Flanders."

Sir Walter scarcely deigned to reply to Du Bois; but looking upon him with contempt, he only said, "Low born as you are, and yet lower bred in spirit, I will not parley with you."

"You will not," replied Du Bois; "why, low born as I am, you would, nevertheless, have honoured me by mingling my blood with your own; for I am kinsman to yonder wanton, whom you have seduced from her allegiance to me, her natural protector."

Sir Walter, fired by the insult cast upon Anna, no longer kept silence; but instantly replied, "It is false; and do not thou dare to name, in other than the holiest terms, a creature, who, pure as the spirits of light, neither in the bond of the body, nor of the soul, can be allied to such as thou art."

"Indeed," answered Du Bois, still anxious to add to the sufferings of his captive; "but there is one proof that I can give of the power of kindred at least; for I can, even before your face, bestow her as a reward upon one who helped me to conquer the hero of Flanders — the invincible D'Anghien."

Anna found resolution to speak. "You have no right, Du Bois," she said firmly, yet in a low voice, "to dispose of me. My father, who is dead, gave you none; and I am neither so friendless, nor yet so helpless, as to submit to tyranny."

"Peace, my pretty reclaimed bird," replied Du Bois; "thy jesses are secure now, and we will cast the hood upon thee, and place thee on the perch till we would fly thee at the game; so never ruffle thy plumage, for it will not avail. But, before thou art disposed of, there is something we would propose to this knight of the manacled hand."

"Du Bois," said Anna, "if you are so base to disregard your own fame, at least for the honour of that blood to which you claim alliance, in the name of my dead father, I would beseech you to spare these cruel taunts to one who is within your power. Take some shame to yourself thus to insult the fallen."

"Shame!" replied Du Bois; "I take shame to myself to think that I am now to solicit of Sir Walter a boon, aye, a boon to do a kind-

ness to himself, and to save me the grief I should feel to sit in judgment and condemn to death one so invincible. D'Anghien," he added, in a more serious tone, " though a hero, you are a man, and as such, I conclude you have some value for life. Will you hear the terms on which alone it can be spared to you?"

" If my life is your gift alone," answered Sir Walter, " I would not stoop to take it of you, though I might obtain it but by a word. I will not hear you."

Anna clasped her hands together, and vehemently exclaimed, " Oh! do not say so, let him speak; do not exasperate him; live! live! do not leave me for ever."

" I have her leave to speak at least," said Du Bois, " and I will be bold to use it. Sir Walter d'Anghien, answer truly what I shall now demand, and your life shall be spared to you. Aye, and if you deal wisely in this matter, I know not, as a reward for the good service you may do to our cause, but that I may set you at liberty after this day is won, with my pretty bird here, so that you may both set up

your roost upon one perch. Hear, and answer to what I would demand."

"Ask me nothing," replied Sir Walter; "I will neither reply to your questions, nor acknowledge your power to detain me as a prisoner. You are but second in the command of these unhappy people. I demand to be taken before Von Artaveld. He, though a rebel, is the only one amongst you who acts upon honourable motives, however they may be mistaken. I demand to see him."

"And who shall answer that demand," said Du Bois, proudly; "I am Von Artaveld's equal in power, and am neither his foot page nor his varlet. But know, that were I inclined to comply with your demand, I have not the means. Von Artaveld, long ere this, has marched to surprise your allied forces. La Nuiteé has followed to reinforce him; and Du Bois remains here the chief in command. Von Artaveld at this moment is most likely engaged in battle on *Mont d'Or*."

"And I am here!" exclaimed Sir Walter, forgetting all, at the moment, but the indignation

he felt at having been thus entrapped into the hands of his enemy. "Cruel, accursed Bu Bois, thou hast surprised, overthrown, chained me like a coward and a slave; made me inactive, useless to my brave followers, and vile in my own eyes. Take thy sword, plunge it at once into my heart, and it will be the only act of mercy thou hast yet ever shewn to a human being."

Du Bois answered nothing, for he could be cold in his malice; but he drew forth his dagger from its sheath.

Anna flew towards her wicked kinsman, laid her hands upon his arm, and said, imploringly, "Oh! do not heed him. D'Anghien speaks the words of frenzy. You have made him mad. Oh! spare him, spare him."

"Let him hear the terms that I would offer, then," replied Du Bois; "and I swear by the cause to which I am devoted, by my father's tomb I swear, and by whatever oath thy own faith would enjoin, that, should he comply with my desires, not so much as a hair that covers his head shall be harmed by me or mine. Do you speak to him, if you would save him."

Anna now turned to Sir Walter, who stood with his figure raised to its utmost height; a proud and deep sense of feeling holding each feature of his countenance fixed and immovable to meet the death which he expected from the hand of Du Bois with dauntless resolution. Anna clung to him, pressed her hands together, looked up in his face, and, in accents of ineffable tenderness and sorrow, conjured him to listen to what Du Bois had to propose. "For my sake do it, nay, only for my sake," said Anna; "think how much pains you took to win me, how dearly I have loved you; think I have not a friend on earth but yourself; and if there is a means to save you to me, do not reject it. Do not leave me an orphan, in this world alone — do but hear Du Bois."

Sir Walter folded her in his arms — a convulsive movement seemed to agitate his whole frame — he looked tenderly and fixedly upon Anna, kissed her cheek, and turning to Du Bois, he said, "Tell me what you would propose?"

"The terms may seem harsh," answered Du Bois, "but I have no others to offer; yet I will

not ask you to bear arms against your uncle the Earl of Flanders."

"You dare not," said Sir Walter, indignantly.

"Hush! hush!" said Anna softly; "do not again incense him."

Du Bois continued—"I would ask you, Sir Walter, only to reply with truth to such questions as I shall propose. First, what is the strength of France against us?"

"Sufficient to chastise rebellion," replied D'Anghien. Anna looked at him imploringly.

"Answer me directly," said Du Bois, "and not with such evasive insolence; I will not be played with. Once more, I demand what are the numbers of our enemy; are they now all assembled in yonder plain, or are we to expect a greater force to support them?"

"I will hear no more," said Sir Walter. "What think you that I am? Think you that I will answer questions that would make me a traitor? But know, thee and thy subtlety I despise alike; I am not to be asked, forsooth, to bear arms against my prince, but to betray him with my tongue; a nice distinction, truly, — worthy

the cunning of a villain, and the heart of a coward."

"You reject, then, the terms I offer?" said Du Bois.

"As I would whatever is infamous," replied D'Anghien.

"Then you shall suffer," continued Du Bois, and he walked towards the entrance, as if about to leave the tent. Anna intercepted his passage, threw herself at his feet, and, clinging fast hold of him, was about to plead fervently for Sir Walter's life; but Du Bois, who was unmoved, shook off her hold, and once more essayed to pass out. Despair now suggested to Anna the only argument that might possibly prevail with D'Anghien's cruel enemy.

"Du Bois," she said, endeavouring to appear composed, "though you are devoid of every feeling of mercy for another, yet feel for *yourself*. The fortune of this battle is yet undecided. It is yet possible you may be vanquished, and become so reduced, or driven to flight, that you must at last solicit the allies to grant you terms. Think, then, whilst D'Anghien lives,

and lives your prisoner, of what advantage that circumstance may be to you. His life is held so dear, that the Earl, to save it, would relinquish the very power he is now in arms to regain. Oh! think of this; you may wish you had done so when it is too late."

Hardened as he was, Du Bois seemed startled by this argument, the sound policy of which he could not deny. Anna had held it out as her last and only hope to save Sir Walter. She saw the uncertainty of her kinsman's purpose, and that his mind wavered, for he stood still and musing. She looked upon him with eyes glistening with expectation, and eager to catch the least word that might escape his lips; whilst Sir Walter, who, (though he would have preferred death to life on dishonourable terms,) when there was a chance he might live without betraying his uncle, could not feel indifferent to the means proposed to save him by a being so dear to him as Anna.

Du Bois seemed about to speak, when one of his people rushed into the tent, and suddenly

exclaimed, "Von Artaveld is killed! a scout has this moment brought the intelligence that he has fallen on *Mont d'Or*, and it is believed by the hand of Lewis de Male."

Even Du Bois was shocked at hearing of the death of his brave fellow captain, the self-devoted defender of the liberties of Ghent. "Von Artaveld slain!" said he, "fallen by the hand of Lewis de Male! — But I will take ample vengeance, blood for blood; that at least is justice. Lewis, thy triumph shall be but short, and the cry of mourning that resounds through the walls of thy injured city of Ghent, as the lament of Von Artaveld, that cry shall serve as the dirge of thy own sorrow, and speak the death of D'Anghien. No, though hemmed in at this hour by ten thousand foes, and certain that I had not another to live, yet would I take vengeance. Sir Walter, your doom is sealed. Von Artaveld's fate is your own sentence."

"I am prepared to meet it," said Sir Walter. "The death of Von Artaveld, such as a brave man would desire in the field of contest, is to

me at this moment an object of envy, since my doom is alone the consequence of thy treachery and baseness."

"It is false," cried Du Bois. "The trap that was laid to catch thee was devised by thy uncle's own favourite minion, Gilbert Matthew. He betrayed thee to me."

"Ha! comes the arrow from that quiver?" exclaimed D'Anghien; "no wonder it is venemous. Oh! Anna, my honour lost, ruined, betrayed, led to the death by the cunning of the vilest slave; what can I suffer more? yet there is one pang left me yet, and that the greatest pang of all, for I must part from thee."

"No, no," said Anna; "I cannot, I will not, part thus from you. Du Bois shall relent. I will kneel to him, and he shall trample me beneath his feet ere he moves one step from this place to injure you." She now turned to Du Bois, her countenance full of the speaking eloquence of despair. "Du Bois," she said, "if you have a heart that has but one spark of human feeling, act not with such cruelty towards the innocent. Sir Walter rose but in defence

of his uncle's cause; even as Von Artaveld did in that of his native city. The chances of war are alike to all. Von Artaveld would never desire this sacrifice, in requital of his death. Shew mercy, then, I beseech you, shew mercy."

"You hear her," said Du Bois, addressing Sir Walter; "she pleads warmly. What terms would *you* propose to obtain mercy?"

"Such alone as would become me," replied D'Anghien. "Look upon me, Du Bois — in me you behold the nearest blood of Lewis Earl of Flanders. I now stand before you as the vicegerent of my uncle, in whose name I denounce you a traitor. Throw down your arms, disband your rebellious people, and plead to *me* for mercy. These would be my terms, and none other."

"I am considering at this moment," answered Du Bois, coolly, "what quality, Sir Walter, is most predominant in your mind, and if you are worthy to be deemed more a madman than a fool. Why, you are like a silly traveller, who begs a robber to spare his life, with the assurance that he will afterwards take the first oppor-

tunity of repaying such an act of mercy by hanging the man that shews it. But you are bold, thus to brave it out to the last; and even I can like *that* in you, madman as you are, and my enemy. There is one grace, therefore, I will grant you unsolicited: you shall die as a man, and not be hanged like a dog. My people shall pierce that proud heart with the shaft. You shall be shot to death with arrows."

Anna again threw herself at Du Bois's feet; she pleaded again in accents that despair rendered fearful. "You shall not kill him; I will never leave you till you consent to spare him. If nothing but blood can satisfy that cruel heart, take my life. Give me the torture, or give me death, but spare D'Anghien. Oh! think upon your own end. The time will come when you must die yourself; do not make that hour terrible by the remembrance of an act of murder!"

"Leave me, woman," said Du Bois, attempting to shake off her hold; "leave me; I will never change my purpose, unless Von Artaveld could return from the grave."

Anna wept; she wrung her hands together,

and looked up in Du Bois's face with an expression that might have moved a heart of steel. "Think, Du Bois," she said, "think of me. I am an orphan, the daughter of your near kinsman, your early friend. When you were a child, my father was a father to you; he sheltered you under his roof, nurtured you, and never gave you cause of grief. In his name, therefore, by the spirit that is departed, but still looks down upon this earth, I do solemnly abjure you to forbear to commit an act that must repay your benefactor's kindness by rendering miserable his child; nay, tremble but to think upon it, for in so doing you shall but heap sorrow on your own head."

"Plead to the wind when it ushers in the tempest, and bid that be still," said Du Bois — "do that with success, and I will cease my purpose. Sir Walter, I leave you. Mark yonder sand glass; I give you till that has run down the hour — then shall you suffer. You know your time — prepare to meet it."

Du Bois left the tent to give orders for the execution of the sentence he had passed on Sir

Walter d'Anghien. A stake was driven into the earth, and six chosen archers gladly came forward to do a murder which they were taught by their captain to consider as a requital for the death of their beloved Von Artaveld.

Whilst these preparations were making, Anna remained with Sir Walter; for Du Bois, intent upon destroying his captive, had thought little about her, certain she could not escape him, since the tent was guarded without by a band of his own people. To paint the distress of Sir Walter and Anna would be impossible. They wept, they embraced, they were silent; and again and again they looked upon each other, as if in these last moments they would concentrate the affectionate expressions of years. At last Sir Walter, for the sake of her he loved, endeavoured to be more composed, and to support her sinking spirits by such arguments as he could think upon to comfort her.

Anna heeded them not, and only answered in accents of grief and despair. Tenderness over-

came every other feeling, as Sir Walter once more said to her, "Anna, do not weep for me; remember me, but not with bitterness; think upon me with that subdued sorrow that we feel for the friend with whom we have parted only to meet again. We *shall* meet again, Anna, I feel we shall. Think of that, and do not, I conjure you, destroy this last hope, that brings peace to my heart in my dying hour, by murmuring at the will of Heaven."

"My suffering will be short," said Anna; "I feel I shall not long survive you. The thought that you were murdered will lay my head in an early tomb. Murdered! are they about to murder you?" she added wildly — "no, no, they shall not; I will cast myself before your body and save you, or die by the same shaft. They shall never execute their cruel will."

"It is not their will, Anna," replied Sir Walter; "they could have none without the permission of Heaven. They are but as instruments in a hand mysterious and almighty; which writes the events of human life in

characters that are sometimes fearful, but always just. Man has no power but from God."

"Alas!" said Anna, in a frantic manner, "and can God give men power thus to sacrifice their fellow being? No; it is some evil spirit that leads them on to murder."

"Oh! do not say so," answered D'Anghien; "do not thus question the will of Heaven, nor attribute the severe and awful justice of the Almighty to another cause. Anna, be firm. Hear me. Would you that we should meet again?"

Anna wept. "How can you ask it," said she, "when I have not a hope in Heaven or on earth, but you share it?"

"Then," replied Sir Walter, embracing her with tenderness, "be firm. Trust in God, and we shall yet be happy. Let us spend the short time that remains to me in imploring the divine mercy. There is a life beyond the tomb; and the hope of it should change this hour of bitterness to joy. Do not weep for me, Anna;

support me by your example, and I shall die firmly and in peace."

Anna sobbed aloud, as she hung like a drooping flower, bathed in tears, upon the bosom of Sir Walter. At length, their prayers to Heaven ended, she seemed more composed, and endeavoured to be calm. Yet again and again she turned her head to look upon the fleeting sand, and as it sunk lower and lower in the glass, her heart died within her, and her cheek became more pale; but she could not say, "the time is almost spent."

Sir Walter's eye followed hers in the same direction; he saw the few remaining atoms dropping one by one, as it were, to tell out the flitting moments of life; and clasping Anna in his arms, he pressed her with convulsive energy to his bosom, as if he would yield up his soul in death, where it delighted to hover in life. "Farewell, Anna," he said; "oh! may He who is the Father of the fatherless, comfort and bless you."

Anna could only answer with her tears.

"My time grows short," continued Sir Walter; "I hear a stir without — they are coming for me. But a few moments are left to me — So will pass away the longest life, for time is but a compact of moments; yet time itself shall sink in eternity, and *there* God has placed our rest. — Anna, let this be your comfort. Look, the last drops are falling in the glass; while I clasp you to my bosom they will pass. — Farewell, for ever! — I can suffer nothing after this; the bitterness of death is already past. We have parted. — May God for ever guard you, bless you, and comfort you in life and death."

"Stay! stay!" exclaimed Anna; "do not leave me here. I will follow you to the last. I will — I will be firm. Do not drive me from your sight whilst life remains; while you can but look upon me, I will never leave you; no force shall tear me from you."

"Dearest Anna," said Sir Walter, as he turned to leave the tent with the guard who stood waiting to conduct him to the place of

execution, "I beseech you do not follow me. I would die calmly, that my foes may not enjoy a triumph over my mind, as they do that which they have accomplished over my body — but I am a man, and a weak one. I fear I can never be firm, if I witness this distraction. For my sake, do not follow me; it is my last request."

Anna clung fast to his arm; she looked distractedly in his face, but without seeming to comprehend his words; and then, beholding the men who endeavoured to separate her from his grasp, she asked wildly, "What they came to do?" But ere the guard could answer her question, she exclaimed, "I know it! I know it! you are his murderers!"

The men hurried Sir Walter from the tent. Anna followed with a countenance in which frenzy now seemed to contend with sorrow for her loss. Du Bois stood near the fatal stake. Sir Walter was instantly bound to it. The archers took their stand; they held their bows in readiness — an arrow was in the right hand of each. Once more, Anna essayed to cast her-

self before the body of D'Anghien. Du Bois removed her by force, and held her arms within his grasp. "Silence, frantic woman," he exclaimed; "silence, or the trumpet that is to give the signal for Sir Walter's death shall instantly sound the fatal note to drown thy cries. Archers, prepare."

The executioners immediately placed their arrows in readiness; they had but to bend the bow, and to take their aim. "Sir Walter," continued Du Bois, "look upon those men. Never did they yet draw a shaft that missed its aim. Look, then, upon your death — once more I offer you mercy on the terms I have already proposed."

Anna heard these words, and comprehended their import; but she knew too well the spirit of D'Anghien, and that he was incapable of betraying his uncle. Impressed with this conviction, she uttered a shrill cry of horror, and exclaiming, "Then all is over," sunk senseless into the arms of Du Bois, who caught her as she was falling to the ground.

Sir Walter fixed his eyes for a moment upon Anna, and then raised them towards Du Bois, and replied to the last offer he held out to him of mercy — " I will never play a traitor's part, no, not to save my life. Shew pity, I beseech you, to the unhappy woman who now lies senseless in your arms; for her father's sake do it; he was your friend."

Du Bois seemed not wholly insensible to this last remonstrance, and turned aside to bear her back to his tent, where he gave her in charge to his attendants. This occasioned a momentary delay of the execution; Du Bois once more returned to the place of execution.

" D'Anghien," said he, " offer thy last prayer, I am about to give the signal."

" It shall be welcome to me as the signal of victory," answered D'Anghien, and he looked up to Heaven with a countenance exalted by the most fervid aspirations. Du Bois turned to bid the trumpet sound the death-note, — when, ere he could speak the word, a loud clarion from the outpost of the camp burst upon his

startled ear, and rang throughout the whole line of his station, as a thousand voices at once, mingled together, and in wild confusion, uttered the defiance of war.

CHAP. XIII.

"A HERALD! a herald!" at once exclaimed the archers of Du Bois; "it must be a herald from the enemy." But ere they could enquire the cause of the disturbance at the outpost, a sudden tumult seemed to prevail throughout the camp, and the cries of "France! France!" "St. Denis!" "Charles to the rescue!" "God be with the King!" were heard in reiterated acclamations, amidst the clashing of arms, the trampling of horses, and the shouts of the multitude. "A surprise! a surprise! the enemy is upon us!" again exclaimed the archers.

"La Nuiteé must be defeated, as well as Von Artaveld slain," said Du Bois. "Follow me," he continued, addressing his men-at-arms; "we shall all be cut off if they pass the outpost, and make good their stand. Bring me a horse. I will instantly to the outpost. Follow and support me."

Du Bois mounted his horse without delay, darted forward, followed by his whole band, and made towards the scene of action, leaving Sir Walter D'Anghien fast bound to the stake. In a moment the whole camp was in a tumult, and contest raged on every side.

The lords De Montmorenci and De St. Py fought near the young King; for it was Charles himself who had led on the rescue, to preserve Sir Walter from death.

The King had been informed by Sir Simon de Bête, that D'Anghien was certainly a prisoner to Du Bois; for Sir Simon had only so far succeeded in his mission as to gain entrance into the camp of the insurgents, where he learnt that Sir Walter was condemned to die. Alarmed by this intelligence, Sir Simon had hastened to communicate it to the youthful prince, who lost not a moment in attempting to surprise the rebels in their camp, in hopes to rescue D'Anghien, whilst De Clisson was engaged in giving battle to La Nuiteé in the open field.

Though a boy in years, Charles, in this

instance, acted like a man, and a brave one, and, assisted by his gallant friends, he showed himself this day worthy the order of chivalry under which he had enlisted to add honour to his crown. The King's party were few in numbers when compared with the forces of Du Bois, and fiercely did they contest the prince's attempt to surprise the camp. At length the assailants made their way nigh to the spot where Sir Walter was still bound to the stake.

Sir Simon who (though he wished to save D'Anghien, and to humble Du Bois,) would never personally engage in any conflict against the people of Ghent, had nevertheless followed in the rear of the King's party, but without unsheathing his sword. And though, by pursuing such a conduct, his own life was exposed to hazard, yet he would not quit his station, with the hope that he might be of assistance in finding out where Du Bois had placed Anna, whom he knew to be a prisoner in the camp, and whom he longed once more to have under his own protection.

Whilst the King's party were endeavouring to beat back Du Bois, so as to penetrate into the heart of the encampment, Sir Simon watched his opportunity, turned his horse's head, and dexterously managed to clear the throng around him; then riding up to the stake where D'Anghien was bound, (notwithstanding an arrow that was sent after him by one of the rebels to arrest his progress, and which whizzed close past his head,) leapt from his horse, and now for the first time drew his sword, cut the bonds that confined Sir Walter, and gave him liberty.

D'Anghien warmly expressed his thanks to his deliverer; but Sir Simon thus cut him short: "Nay, there is no time for thanks now; save yourself as fast as you can. There, mount my horse; and here, take my sword, for you are unarmed; defend yourself as well as you can, and join the King's party, else you may be easily marked out by one of those same fellows that sent a shaft after me just now. But first tell me in pity, if you know where that rascally

Du Bois has bestowed the poor orphan; where is Anna?"

"But now," replied Sir Walter, "she was conveyed senseless from this spot to yonder tent, at the time when Du Bois would have deprived me of life, but that I was saved by the alarm of the rescue. I will join them. Do you hasten to Anna, and tell her that D'Anghien still lives, — lives but for her."

Sir Simon instantly walked towards the tent, which had been left free by the guard, in the confusion occasioned by the sudden attack of the French. He entered it without opposition or delay, as Sir Walter rode off towards that part of the camp where the adversaries were engaged man to man.

Victory for a time appeared to hang in doubtful balance; for Du Bois, although, from the baseness of his nature, he could not be called a brave man, yet possessed a sufficiency of animal fierceness, and brutal insensibility, to be at once bold in action, and reckless of danger; and he now determined to resist to the last ex-

tremity. At length the King's party were reinforced by the arrival of the men-at-arms under the banner of the Earl of Flanders; for Lewis de Male having learnt from an esquire of the royal household for what purpose Charles had quitted his secure station in the plain, immediately hastened to his assistance at the head of his own battalion.

At the moment Lewis arrived, D'Anghien was engaged almost in single combat with Du Bois. They seemed equal in strength and in dexterity, whilst the resolution that each maintained, the one to destroy the other, and the energy of their mutual hatred, made them combat more like fiends than men.

In one respect Du Bois had the advantage, for he was completely armed, whilst D'Anghien's sole defence was a shield he had torn from the arm of a dying man, and his weapon, the sword given to him by Sir Simon. Du Bois, finding himself unequal to cope with Sir Walter in the use of the sword, threw his own away, and

snatched up a ponderous mace that hung at the saddle bow of the war-horse he had hastily mounted, when he led the way to resist the surprise of his enemies.

Sir Walter was bare-headed. Du Bois therefore resolved to watch a favourable moment to dash out D'Anghien's brains with the fearful instrument that he now brandished in his hand. The Earl at this crisis saw the conflict, and the unequal strife to which his nephew was exposed; and dashing spurs into his courser's sides, he came up with Du Bois, and so suddenly and fiercely attacked him with his lance of Bourdeaux steel, that, striking the arm of the rebel, the mace fell from his hand upon the ground.

Du Bois, now disarmed, thought only upon self-preservation. He was mounted on one of the fleetest horses ever ridden by man, and, trusting to the animal alone for safety, he gored his sides with the spur till the blood started from them, and, scouring across the plain, took his flight towards the road that led to Ghent, fol-

lowed by a shower of arrows, not one of which so much as touched him. *

Deserted by their leader, the bands of Du Bois became completely broken, and, thus dispirited, soon fell before their enemies. The allies were now the victors of Rosebecque. De Clisson had effectually succeeded in conquering La Nuiteé and his host on the plains; and the allies being complete victors of Rosebecque, Charles the Sixth of France, with the Earl of Flanders and the brave Sir Walter d'Anghien, took possession the same day of the enemy's camp and all that it contained. Mercy was shewn to those who yielded to the conquerors, and thousands of prisoners helped to form their triumph, whilst the bodies of the wounded and the slaughtered lay piled in heaps upon the field of battle.

After the conflict, the nobles and courtiers crowded round the young King, eager to pay

* It may be some satisfaction to the reader, to know that Du Bois did not long survive the battle of Rosebecque: he was killed soon after, in an attempt again to raise the White Hoods.

their compliments to him for the gallant part he had personally sustained in the action; and all were vehement and extravagant in the commendations they bestowed upon the prince. De Clisson looked angrily upon them, as he stood unhelmed and wiping his brows near the King, and bluntly said, "His grace has done well enough for his years, and has given the promise of doing better hereafter. Do not you, then, my lords, fill his grace's head with the notion that he is already an accomplished knight; for many a dear-bought field, long experience, and many a hard blow, must be won and received, before any man, though he were ten times a king, can deserve that title."

"That title is due to our Constable," said Charles, with perfect good-humour; "and to him we offer our thanks for having this day been enabled to quell the insolence of these White Hoods, and to restore to the Lord Lewis de Male his earldom in Flanders. For ourself we have done but little; and, after all, there is little honour, we fear, in putting down rogues."

"Please your grace," said Sir Simon de

Bête, who now stood near, having that instant joined the circle collected about the King, — "Please your grace, there was at least *one* gallant spirit amongst the White Hoods, and that I will take upon me to assert, on my own honour as a knight. Von Artaveld, who fell in the field, was a brave man."

"Have our heralds yet found his body in searching for the slain?" enquired Charles. "We would gladly look upon the face of one in death who, though a traitor, and the leader of villains, has thus resolutely maintained the cause he dared espouse. We will award a hundred pieces of gold to any person who shall bring before us the body of this arch rebel."

"I can point out the spot," said Sir Simon, "where the corpse of Von Artaveld may be found. It lies near a little mound of earth, on the summit of *Mont d'Or*. But I would beseech your grace to spare his memory such hard terms. Whatever Von Artaveld did, (though I say not he did it justly,) yet I will vouch for it, upon the peril of my life, that he did it from no private motive, but all for the good of

Ghent. He died in acting what he thought to be his duty; and as he did so, I would entreat you, dear your grace, whilst you condemn the act, not to deal too harshly with the motive. The dead have no means to rebut slander, and this should teach the living to shew forbearance in the censure of their memory."

"You have justly reproved the licence of our speech, honest man," said the King; "and I wish that all such as chronicle the acts of princes would hold by so worthy a rule. You are, doubtless, Von Artaveld's dear friend."

"I was his fellow-citizen," replied Sir Simon; "and as chief magistrate of Ghent, I was in some measure his ruler, and, please your grace, it has always seemed to me, that, being such, I should be the friend of all honest citizens under my rule; for kings and magistrates are but as the fathers of a family. A desire to do good to all should be their first principle of action. And saying this, reminds me that I would crave your majesty to grant a petition that I would here make to you, as the lord paramount of this country."

"We will gladly hear it," replied Charles; "and we doubt not that it is a suit we may grant with all honour, since it is preferred to us by you. In the meantime, let our people bring hither the body of Von Artaveld. Now, Sir Simon, what is your desire?"

"May it please your grace's majesty to hear me apart," answered Sir Simon; "for I have much to say, that I could wish to meet no ear but your grace's."

The King, for some time, talked apart with Sir Simon, who, soon after, left the presence of Charles, and retired. He returned, however, in a short space of time, accompanied by Anna, whose features were concealed by the long black veil she had thrown over them; impelled thus to shroud her person by those feelings of bashfulness and modesty she felt, at the thought of being led into the presence of the King, whilst surrounded by so numerous a train. As Sir Simon was advancing towards Charles, and conducting Anna to present her to the prince, he heard the sounds of music, in a slow and melancholy strain; whilst the trumpet, that sounded

from time to time, spoke a sad and lengthened note, as the heralds and men-at-arms advanced, bearing upon their shields the body of Von Artaveld, their party headed by Sir Walter d'Anghien, who felt a generous concern (even before the young King had issued his orders) to search for the body of the gallant foe, that the last rites of honour might be paid to his memory.

As the band advanced with measured steps, and mute as the corpse they bore, the justice of this solemn act, in thus honouring the memory of the brave, seemed to strike upon all hearts. No man remembered that Von Artaveld had been an enemy. They thought but of his gallant spirit, and that he was now a lifeless corpse. All present turned towards the band who bore his honoured remains; every eye was eloquent, though not a tongue spoke; and the deep silence that reigned around was only broken by the long and sad sounds of the trumpet, that spoke at intervals a mort-note for the fallen.

Charles advanced to meet the escort, and,

observing Sir Walter d'Anghien, embraced him in silence. Sir Walter respectfully saluted the young King, and bid his followers put down the corpse. As they lowered the shields upon which it was borne, all men eagerly pressed around to gain a last look of those manly features that appeared commanding even in death.

Charles bent over the body, and for some time gazed steadfastly and silently upon it. At length he said, "This is a sad sight, so brave as men say thou wast, and so noble, to be cut off in the flower of thy youth. Had'st thou but shewn half of thy great qualities in a better cause, the world would have revered thee; but as it is, we can but wish thou had'st not fallen whilst thy memory must be stained with the name of a traitor."

"Nay, not so, I trust, your grace," said Sir Simon, who a second time ventured to vindicate his deceased friend. "Von Artaveld deserved a better name, since he never sought to betray his country. Had others been but like him, my Lord of Flanders, long ere this, had satis-

fied the injured citizens of Ghent, and would have ruled in peace; since it was chiefly through the evil counsels of Gilbert Matthew that the citizens were aggrieved by their lord. And see how Gilbert requited his favour. On the first occasion that he found himself in peril, he basely betrayed Sir Walter d'Anghien into the hands of that rascally Du Bois. I have learnt all the truth from this damsel."

"What!" exclaimed Lewis de Male, "was it Gilbert Matthew who betrayed Sir Walter into danger?"

"It was, indeed," replied D'Anghien; "and, but for the generous exertions of Sir Simon de Bête, and of this gracious prince, (who learnt from Sir Simon my danger, and hastened to deliver me,) I must have fallen by the cruelty of Du Bois."

"Oh! my gracious sovereign," said Lewis de Male, as he bent on his knee before the King, "how shall I thank you? you have this day restored to me, not only my right in Flanders, but what is yet dearer to me, the friend to whom I am bound by the ties of blood and gratitude.

Our citizens of Ghent have long complained of Gilbert Matthew, and murmured at the abuses he committed as deacon of the pilots. Upon Gilbert, therefore, we will execute an act of justice, that shall at once satisfy Ghent, and requite the injury meditated against Sir Walter's life. The accursed instrument of Du Bois' arts and policy, the sorceress Ursula, is already condemned to suffer; let Gilbert Matthew hang like a dog, as he deserves to do, upon the same tree with her.

"The sentence is a just one," said the Duke of Burgundy. "I will myself see it executed, and that instantly, for 'tis pity justice should be delayed."

Burgundy, without farther ceremony, left the royal presence. Gilbert Matthew had been deeply employed, both by himself and the late Countess of Artois, in carrying on their intrigues; and the duke, alarmed lest Gilbert should betray some things that he could wish to rest for ever a secret, hastened to see his own minion so effectually silenced that there could be nothing to fear hereafter.

Gilbert was dragged to the gallows that the men-at-arms had formed out of some timbers in the camp; and, under pretext of abhorrence for Gilbert's act of treachery to D'Anghien, Burgundy refused even to hold a moment's parley with him before he died; but hanged both Gilbert and Ursula, as quickly as he could have them tied up together to the fatal tree.

Thus do the meaner instruments of cunning and villainy often fall a sacrifice to the very power they have served; and when they are no longer of use, they are made to suffer, in order to conceal the very plots they have helped to carry on: whilst their more elevated employers, under the mask of justice, commit a double act of treachery; first, by betraying them into the commission of the crimes, and then, by condemning them as the actors of them. In the present instance, however, both Ursula and Gilbert truly deserved the fate to which they were consigned.

When the Duke of Burgundy quitted the royal presence to see Gilbert Matthew dispatched, he left the young King and his court

still looking upon the body of Von Artaveld, and remarking upon his conduct and his death. De Clisson shook his head, as a sigh stole from his bosom, and he said, "I did not think thus to have sorrowed for an enemy; but a generous mind and a great heart command respect, though they are found in an heathen. Farewell, thou brave but mistaken man. De Clisson has seen many a one dead in the field; but none that he lamented, among his enemies, as thee. — Remove the body," added the constable; "for the King droops, and though this sorrow be generous, as well as becoming in youth, yet we must not so far forget the justice of our own cause, as to change, by sorrow, a day of victory into one of mourning."

"Von Artaveld shall have an honourable interment in Ghent," said Lewis de Male; "I bear no anger to his memory."

"Spoken like yourself, my Lord Lewis," said Sir Simon, who stood wiping his eyes as he turned from looking upon the corpse of his favourite citizen; "and I would beg, might I venture to name it, that as I have been for so

many years chief burgomaster and master of the goldsmiths' company, and a citizen of no mean standing in Ghent, I would ask, that I might be allowed to have the conduct of his funeral rites, for as I loved Von Artaveld in life, I will be the defender of his fair fame in death, and I would see his remains piously and honourably consigned to that dust, of which I myself, being a man of years, must soon look to become a part."

"Your desire shall be granted, worthy Sir Simon," said the King; "bear the body hence. And now let us leave this mournful theme, and, in our desire to do honour to the dead, let us not forget to do our duty to the living. Sir Simon, we have remembered the tale that you told to us but now, and we long to look upon the face of that fair maid whom you professed to love for her virtues as your own child."

"And she shall be my own child, the child of my soul," said Sir Simon; "if adoption, and care, and tenderness can make her such. Come forward, Anna; draw aside your veil."

Anna advanced, but modestly hesitated to

approach the King. "Nay, never fear, dearest maiden," said Charles, as he himself drew aside her veil; "the innocent may surely meet with confidence an earthly king, when they are ever before the face of a heavenly one. We have heard of your rare merit. This good man has told us all, and we long to honour you for it. By the faith of a true knight," added the young King, smiling as he spoke, "you have, Sir Simon, a nice eye for beauty. Were you but one year younger than you are, and ourself more used to the lance, we would break one with you to win but a token from this delicate hand." And the monarch of France gallantly pressed it to his lips as he spoke. "But we fear," continued the prince, "that ours would be but a short lived favour, since, if we mistake not, there is one in this company who has long had a better claim to it."

"Aye, that there is," said Sir Simon; "and I am the man."

The courtiers tittered. "Nay, gentles and nobles, do not laugh too soon," added Sir Simon, as he turned and looked sharply upon

them; "and do not mistake an old man's motive, when he openly professes to love a young, a beautiful, and a friendless orphan. Anna, my child, I have none, that in the course of nature can call me father, and you are all to me. I have wealth, that is, if it is spared to me, if I am not to be attainted for having loved my native city — I will bestow upon you a noble dower, and when my old wife is dead, (for she must be cared for, though she be not of the kindest humour,) you shall have all the rest, so that my Lord of Flanders will but consent to give you to Sir Walter d'Anghien for a wife, and you will be as a jewel to him, aye, and the brightest in the coronet that circles his brow, though he be the nephew and the friend of an Earl."

Anna blushed deeply, cast her eyes upon the ground, but was too much overpowered, both by the goodness of heart, and the bluntness of Sir Simon, to be able to reply to him.

"Come, my Lord Lewis," said the King, "what say you? Shall we make this victory a marriage festival, and unite hands where hearts have long been agreed?"

Lewis hesitated a moment, yet it was but a moment; he had been surprised, but his better purpose was unchanged, and, advancing towards Anna, he took her hand, and placed it within that of Sir Walter d'Anghien.

"I owe your grace," said the Earl, in reply to the King, "both thanks and duty for having restored to me my right in Flanders; but to this maiden I owe more. Her courage, faith, and resolution preserved my life. And what I now give her is but an earnest of my gratitude; yet let me say it, in justice to her own rare merit, and my sense of it, that, in bestowing her upon Sir Walter d'Anghien, her own beauty and virtue are a sufficient dower. Women of an ordinary cast need a portion to recommend them, but true merit needs it not. Take her, Sir Walter, as she is, and endeavour to deserve her."

Sir Walter, overcome by those feelings that rushed in a full tide of joy upon his heart, could scarcely utter his sense of them, or express his thanks to his uncle, and to the young King, whilst he only looked at Anna, and fervently

grasped her hand. True love is ever delicate, and Sir Walter loved too well to endure a witness of his expressions of affection. He therefore endeavoured to collect himself, and only said, in a voice agitated with strong, though delightful emotions, "How shall I ever find the occasion to prove the gratitude I feel, both to this generous prince, and to you, my noble uncle, for the happiness you have conferred upon me in this dearest maiden? I receive *her* more joyfully without a portion, than I should another who might possess worlds for her dower."

"But you shall not receive her without a portion," said Sir Simon. "It shall never be said that the adopted child of the chief burgomaster in Ghent was given pennyless, though to an Earl's kinsman; and such a child deserves all, and more than I can do for her. Thank God I have lived to see this hour. Once let me but leave my poor orphan girl in the hands of a husband who will cherish her as I have done, and I can then be content to die; for what have I then left to do in this world?"

"Your wish, at least one part of it, shall be

accomplished," said the young King, "for we will ourself lead this fair damsel to the church porch *, and there give her to the gallant Sir Walter. What say you, Anna? speak; will you consent to be a daughter of France?"

"Your majesty," replied Anna, modestly, "honours me beyond my desert; for the daughter of a simple burgher of Ghent must not look to be so distinguished by a prince of France. I am bound in all duty to your grace. But there is yet a nearer and a dearer tie,—that of gratitude. Sir Simon de Bête protected me, cared for me, and made me even as the child of his own bosom, when I was an orphan, without a friend in this world to shelter me. He was to me a father indeed. My gratitude to him can cease but with life; it is only from his hand that I would be given to another. Oh! my father," she added, addressing herself to Sir Simon, "for such you have made me feel I ought to call you,—my father, bless me at the altar of God, as I there offer up the most holy

* The marriage ceremony, at the time of our narrative, was performed in the church porch.

of all vows, in giving this poor hand to Sir Walter ; and I doubt not but Heaven will accept them, and make us happy as your own heart could wish us."

"Bless you, my child?" said Sir Simon; "why I bless you every hour I live, for you have made me feel, old as I am, that I am yet worth something, since I have been able to do some good to such a sweet creature as you are. May Heaven and all the Saints bless you ; and with this gracious King's leave, I will soon perform the office his young majesty would have enacted for me, and lead you to the chureh porch myself with all my heart."

"We shall rejoice to see it," said the King; "and now, my friends, let us all to my tent, where we shall find the refreshment we need after this day's toil. We there will fill a goblet to wish joy to these honoured nuptials. Sir Walter, lead on with your affianced bride."

Great was the glory of Sir Simon, when, a few days after the victory of Rosebecque, he led Anna to the church door as her father, on the occasion of her nuptials with Sir Walter,

Lord of Anghien. But still greater was the glory of the good man, when, some time after, he gave two golden spoons, richly worked and chased under his own directions by his own people, bearing an inscription, importing that the said spoons were bestowed by Sir Simon de Bête, knight, master of the goldsmiths company, and burgomaster of Ghent, upon the occasion of his acting as sponsor to the son and heir of Sir Walter, Lord of Anghien, and his fair spouse Anna of Ghent.

THE END.

London:
Printed by A. & R. Spottiswoode,
New-Street-Square.

WORKS

BY

THE AUTHOR OF THE WHITE HOODS.

Published by Messrs. Longman & Co.
Paternoster Row.

DE FOIX; or, Sketches of the Manners and Customs of the Fourteenth Century. An Historical Romance. In Three Volumes. Price 1*l.* 7*s.*

LETTERS written during a Tour through NORMANDY, BRITANNY, and other Parts of FRANCE, in 1818. Including local and historical Descriptions; with Remarks on the Manners and Character of the People. With numerous Engravings, after drawings by Charles A. Stothard, F.S.A. In quarto. Price 2*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

MEMOIRS; including original Journals, Letters, Papers, and Antiquarian Tracts of the late Charles A. Stothard, F.S.A., Author of the Monumental Effigies of Great Britain. With connective Notices of his Life, and some Account of a Journey in the Netherlands. Price 15*s.*

CRITICAL OPINIONS, in favour of the Romance of De Foix.

From "The Times."

"In executing this task, Mrs. Bray has displayed a very intimate acquaintance with the writings of the chroniclers of those remote times, as well as with all other sources, monumental and architectural, from which information respecting them can be derived. Nothing can be more accurate nor more striking than the pictures of tournaments and battles which she presents; and in the less trite, and therefore, perhaps, more interesting features of the domestic habits and customs of the times, she is quite as successful. — It would be difficult, if not *impossible*, to point out any similar work in our language which more completely succeeds in conveying a familiar idea of the manners of a period, of which more grave history gives nothing but the prominent facts. — Nothing can be better adapted for the purposes of romance than the character of Gaston Phœbus Count De Foix. — All the minor details, the description of the habitations and manners of the people to whom the romance relates, are given with a fidelity and minuteness which can scarcely be too highly praised, and which will even satisfy, (if any thing can satisfy,) the hypercriticism of the most fastidious antiquaries. The public taste of late appears to have been directed to subjects relating to the times of chivalry; and among all the works which have recently appeared connected with those subjects, we know of none more amusing and satisfactory than this romance of Mrs. Bray."

From "The Literary Gazette."

"The writer of the present work has had uncommon opportunities for observation, and she has not neglected them. The considerable mass of information which she has collected is no *dead letter* in her hand, and chivalric pomp and pageantry is painted as by an eye-witness of the costume and feats. —

We most cordially commend the grace of the language, the interest of the descriptions, and proceed with quotations that will allow our readers to judge for themselves.

"But our specimens are only a few of the interesting details with which these volumes abound; for scarcely is there a chapter without some curious and spirited sketch of scenes rescued from long, long oblivion; and we most cordially recommend these volumes to the lovers of chivalric lore, and also to the lovers of the Great Unknown."

From "The Literary Chronicle."

"If the age of chivalry be past, as Mr. Burke said, when a million of swords did not leap from their scabbards to avenge the death of the ill-fated Marie Antoinette, it is still preserved in memory, and will continue to be perpetuated while it has historians like Mrs. Bray. Yes, gentle reader, smile not at the word *historian;* for although De Foix professes only to be an historical romance, yet it is a *faithful* and *vivid* picture of the warlike character, manners, and customs of that chivalrous age — the fourteenth century. The readers of De Foix will be at once reminded of Sir Walter Scott. — The story of De Foix may be considered as the thread on which gems of great value and great beauty are strung; and it is sufficiently connected to engage the attention of the reader, unless, indeed, the charms of description should make him view the work as a series of distinct pictures, rather than as parts of the same group. — We shall be glad again to meet her in the regions of historical romance. — Mrs. Bray is a highly-gifted woman, and of a studious disposition. As a proof of her talents and acquaintance with this subject, we need only mention that the concluding parts of the monumental effigies of Great Britain, drawn and etched by her late husband Mr. C. Stothard, are now publishing under her direction, in a manner which will associate her name with the arts and antiquities of her country."

From "The Gazette of Literature, Fashion, and Art."

"There is so much easy vigour, and so little effort — so much erudite research, and so little conceit — so much deep interest, and so little striving after incident — so much quiet power, and yet so little pretension — so much, in fine, of all that generally characterizes the productions of the stronger sex, in this work, that we were induced more than once, in our perusal of De Foix, to satisfy ourselves, by reverting to the title page, that we had really got a lady's book in our hands. It is an exceedingly interesting work, and one which reflects the highest credit on the industry as well as the genius of the writer."

From "The Gentleman's Magazine."

"We have courtly feasts, processions, tournaments, and sieges; details of ecclesiastical, civil, and military costume. With these the antiquary will be pleased; while the general reader will find himself interested and amused by the variety of the characters, and the conduct of the tale. In our opinion, this romance will add to the reputation Mrs. Bray has already acquired by her 'Letters from Normandy and Britanny,' and is a very happy attempt in a line of writing which had so long been pre-occupied by a master hand, as to render the undertaking one of adventurous daring."

For opinions equally favourable to this work, see also La Belle Assemblée, The Norfolk Chronicle, Macclesfield Courier, and other periodicals.

M.T.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
3 0112 041414712